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ABSTRACT

Designed to offer more than slogans and buzzwords to practitioners who are grappling with an array of education controversies, this book provides classroom teachers with a spectrum of information about current controversies so that they will be better equipped to blend action with reflection. The book deliberately resists extremes and argues for less contentious points of view. The book's introduction explores the five overarching goals for this collaborative project: (1) to resist faddism and false dualisms; (2) to promote a deeper understanding of education controversy; (3) to examine the beliefs that underlie the battles; (4) to respond more thoughtfully to educational debates; and (5) to expose the barriers to informed perspectives. The book's chapters, which address various controversies, are: (1) "Censorship--Evaluating Quality without Imposing Agendas" (Anne Drolett Creany); (2) "Inclusion--Celebrating Contributions while Meeting New Challenges" (Kay A. Chick and Deborah M. Clawson); (3) "Classroom Management--Managing the Classroom while Respecting the Child" (Beatrice S. Fennimore and Molly C. Ihli); (4) "Assessment--Allowing Traditional and Alternative Approaches To Co-Exist" (Linda Doutt Culbertson and Gerardo A. Contreras); (5) "Multicultural Education--Celebrating Diversity while Building Community" (Jyotsna Pattnaik); (6) "Families--Offering Support and Joining in Partnership" (Kathryn Delaney); (7) "Pedagogy--Finding a Place for Inquiry Methods and Direct Instruction" (Kay A. Chick); (8) "Reading Instruction--Reconciling Phonics and Whole Language: What Every Reading Teacher Should Know" (Xiaoping Li); (9) "Bilingual Education--Preserving a Child's First Language while Promoting Facility with a Second Language" (Elise Jepson Green); (10) "Gifted and Talented Education--Individual Differences or One-Size-Fits-All?" (Jennifer V. Rotigel); and (11) "Program Evaluation--Monitoring Quality without

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Sacrificing Substance" (Mary Renck Jalongo and Moses M. Mutuku). Each chapter contains references. (EV)

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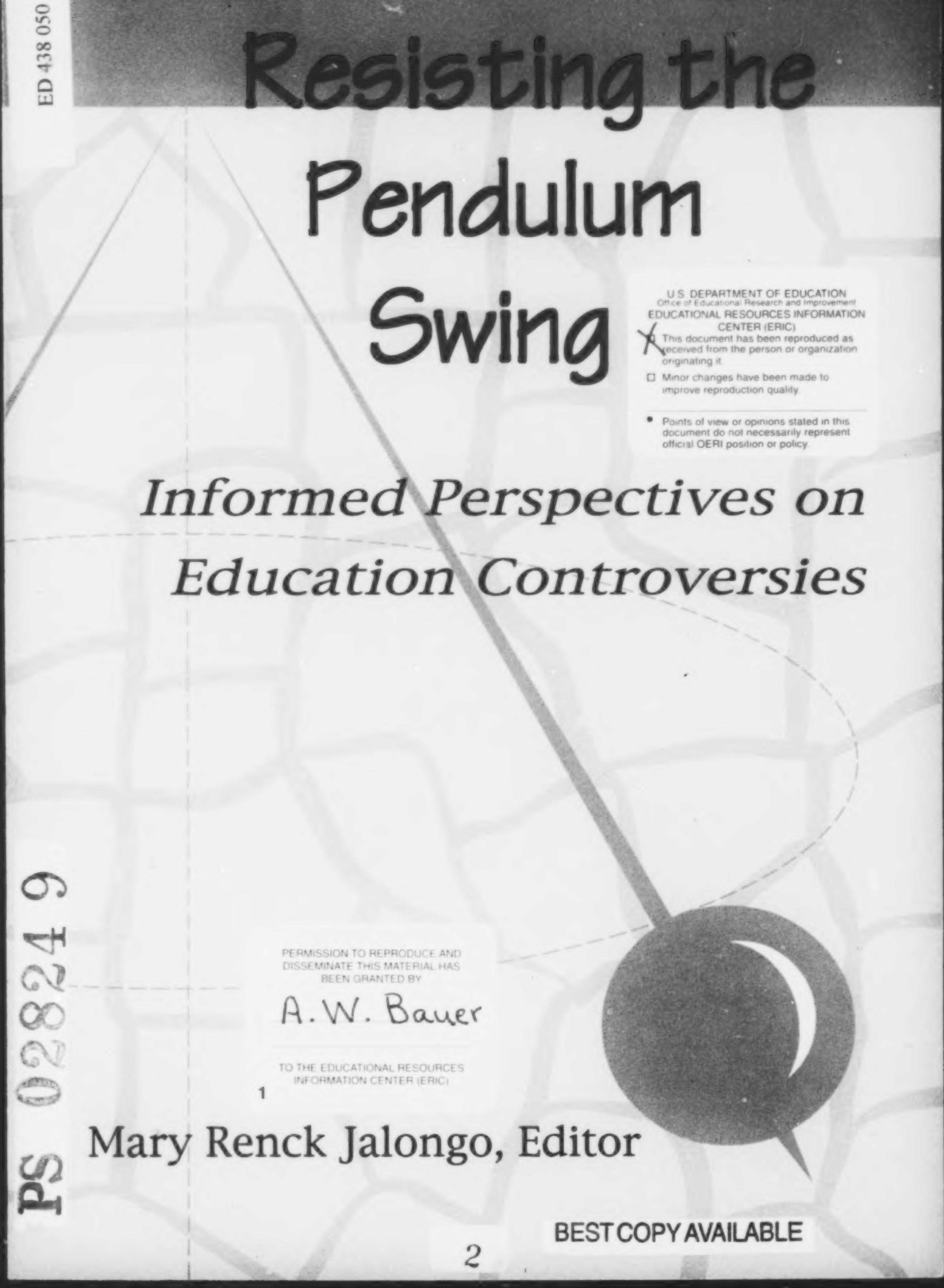

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Informed Perspectives on Education Controversies

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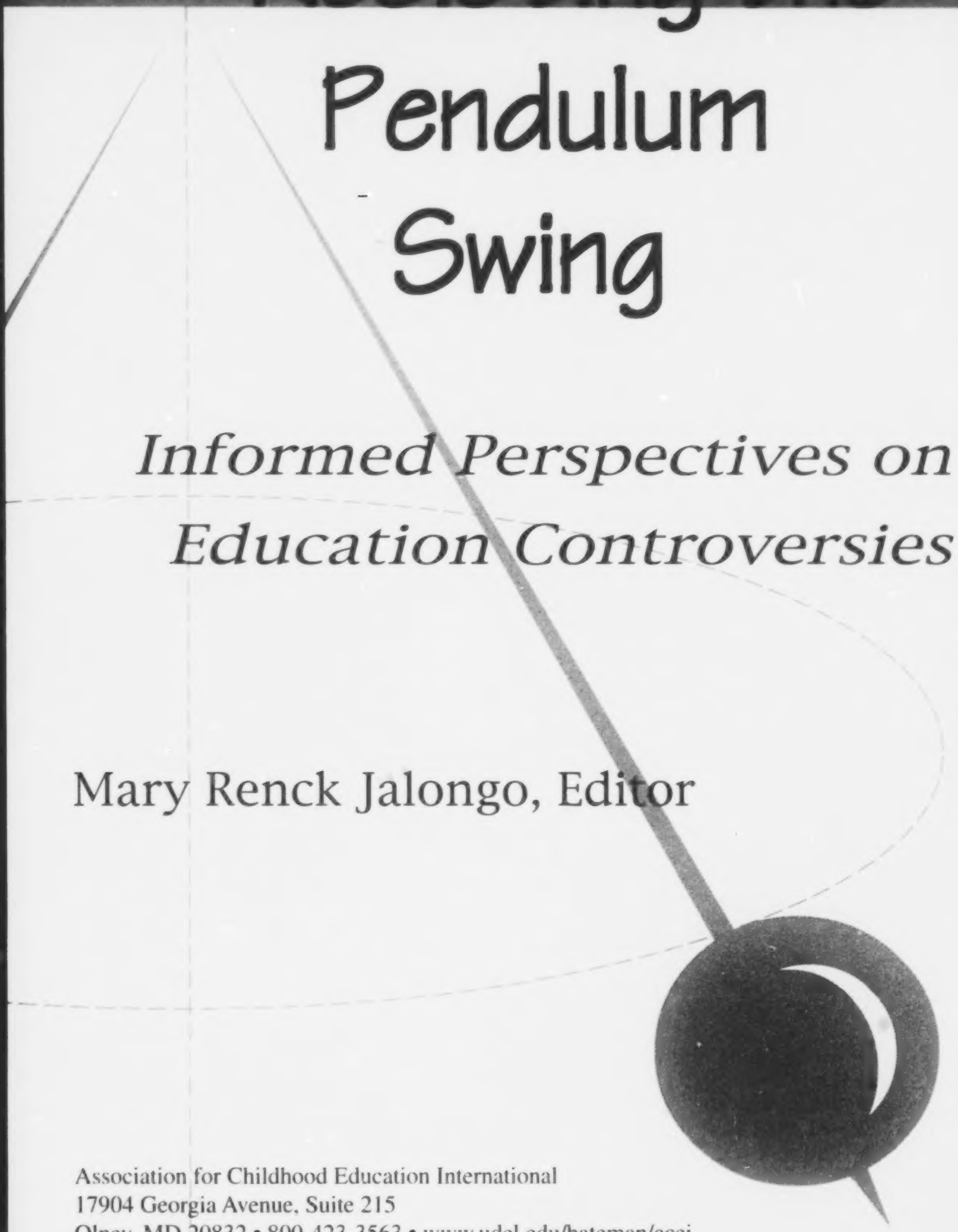

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Informed Perspectives on Education Controversies

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The idea for this book started nearly 10 years ago when I was serving on the ACEI Publications Committee. At an open meeting to hear member recommendations for articles and books, the topic of censorship came up. Later that day, Lucy Prete Martin (ACEI Director of Publications at the time) asked if I might be interested in writing something on censorship for *Childhood Education*. She said that I was an author who was not afraid to take a stand and that teachers confronting censorship issues might appreciate that. I decided to narrow the topic to reflect the subject that I was teaching then, children's literature. I also asked Anne Creany, a doctoral advisee, to be my co-author. That collaboration resulted in "Censorship in Children's Literature: What Teachers Should Know," an article that was published in *Childhood Education* in 1991 and that earned a Washington EdPress Award for a feature article.

In 1998, the topic of censorship came up again as an issue that the membership wanted to explore. At ACEI's annual conference, Anne Bauer (current ACEI Director of Publications) asked if we would be interested in revisiting or expanding upon our censorship article. After mulling it over, I started to think about other manuscripts on controversial topics that, combined, might become an edited book. *Resisting the Pendulum Swing: Informed Perspectives on Education Controversies* is the result. Most of these chapters began as articles for a doctoral seminar that I teach, Writing for Professional Publication, and most of the authors are now professors and mentors with students of their own.

We are particularly appreciative of Barbara Foulks Boyd, Suzanne Winter, and Patricia Crawford, ACEI Publications Committee members who reviewed these chapters and strengthened them with their comments and recommendations. We are equally appreciative of the editorial assistance from Linda Culbertson, who carefully critiqued all the chapters before they were submitted.

Most of all, we are appreciative of this opportunity to collaborate, and to be responsive to the needs of ACEI's membership.

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Jalongo, M. R., & Creany, A. D. (1991). Censorship in children's literature. *Childhood Education, 67*, 143-148.

INTRODUCTION

Mary Renck Jalongo

An elementary school principal received an unexpected visit from his brother, a businessman, who lived in a distant city. The principal wanted to spend some time with his sibling, but he had a prior commitment to attend a dinner meeting of the local reading association. So he persuaded his brother to accompany him to the meeting and while they traveled in the car together, he provided some last-minute coaching about how to fit in with the group. As it turned out, the surprise guest was warmly accepted and considered to be very enlightened about issues in the field of reading. Why? Because his brother directed him to intersperse bits of educational jargon into the conversation with statements such as, "What we need is balanced reading programs," "I support family literacy," and "Whole language advocates have always included phonics."

This true story aptly illustrates our collective motivation for undertaking the daunting task of addressing an array of education controversies. We wanted to offer more than slogans and buzzwords to practitioners who are grappling with these issues. We wanted to provide classroom teachers with a spectrum of information about current controversies so that they would be better equipped to blend action with reflection, thereby achieving what John Dewey (1933) called "praxis." We do this with the full realization that our approach to education debates is not the popular one. More often than not, education controversies are argued in a point/counterpoint fashion that swings back and forth like the proverbial pendulum. In this book, we deliberately resist extremes and argue, against fashion, for less contentious points of view.

In discussing this project with teachers and higher education faculty, all were quick to assume that we would be taking sides, yet this is the very approach we have struggled mightily to resist. As Pearson (1993) points out, "many issues separate us as a field, divide us into camps, and seduce us into a smug sense of righteousness about the position we happen to embrace" (p. 11). We have tried, as I once heard someone put it, "To keep an open mind, but not keep it so open that our brains start to fall out."

In the sections that follow, we examine the five overarching goals for this collaborative project: 1) to resist faddism and false dualisms, 2) to promote a deeper understanding of education controversy, 3) to examine the beliefs that underlie the battles, 4) to respond more thoughtfully to education debates, and 5) to expose the barriers to informed perspectives.

Faddism and False Dualism

Taken as a group, American educators have a well-deserved reputation for possessing a bandwagon mentality. Education innovations pass by like so many Mardi Gras parade floats, inviting administrators and teachers to clamber aboard. Even a cursory look at education trends, buzzwords, metaphors, publications, and cartoons points to the fact that "hot topics" figure prominently in the field. Ultimately, teachers pay the highest price for this faddism. Some comments from practitioners illustrate the cumulative effect:

"It isn't the years that wear you out, it's the mileage. We've been Hunterized, conflict resolutioned, whole languaged—you name it. We barely have time to give one thing a try before moving on to the next."

"I'm jaded, I admit it. My attitude now is, 'just a wait a couple of years and whatever it is will blow over,' and usually, it does. Many of the innovations that were supposed to revolutionize education are almost forgotten or look foolish today."

"The administrators keep telling us that we need to change, that change is a good thing. But their idea of change is like watching a dog chasing its own tail. I sometimes wonder who the change is for. For me, the bottom line is whether it is intended to improve kids' learning or to pad a superintendent wannabe's résumé."

"When I started grad school, I thought how great it was going to be to get the answers and research to back up what I do. It was disappointing to find out that everything is so relative. It got to be a joke in a course on literacy that every time a teacher raised a question about a particular child, the professor would being by saying, 'It depends . . . .' I guess it really does depend on the child and the context, but I know we were hoping for definite answers."

As these candid comments illustrate, the education practitioner's life is anything but simple, and the appropriate courses of action are anything but clear. Faddism tempts educators to approach controversies as absolutes, which eliminates the possibility of discussion and dialogue. Such unwarranted positivism only postpones criticism and interferes with progress. A good contemporary example is the touting of direct instruction as the only and best method for entire groups of urban children, a view that goes unchallenged in some settings because it is portrayed as a racial issue, rather than a pedagogical one.

Similarly, there is a tendency in the field of education to promote false dualisms, such as phonics versus whole language or an unbridled passion for technology pitted against Luddites' resistance to progress. Again, the consequences of extremism are to squander educators' time, energy, talent, and enthusiasm as they attempt to make sense of contradictory points of view. Neither false dualism nor fads do anything to further what can and must be the prime directive of any educational enterprise with children: to substantially foster learning.

In this volume, we deliberately avoid lingering at either end of the continuum. We prevent the education version of political correctness from interfering with well-reasoned perspectives on controversies. We make the assumption that controversies persist precisely because each side represents a partial truth, and that each side can lay some claim to "what works." Like a young child's first attempt to walk on a balance beam, we consider the areas on either side of the beam, yet maintain a focus on the goal; like that child, we take carefully measured steps that prevent us from swaying too much or falling off. We lay no claim to having invented the recommendations that emerge from this effort to stay on course, only to relying on theorists, researchers, and practitioners who are well-versed in the realities of schools and classrooms as our spotters. What keeps it all grounded is an unswerving focus on helping all children to learn.

Understanding Education Controversies

At its most basic, an education controversy is an area of disagreement between groups that hold opposing viewpoints about some significant dimension of the teaching/learning endeavor. These differences of opinion often lead to divisiveness, and the side that is currently in favor changes because each has something worthwhile to offer. Questions such as "Which is better, traditional forms of assessment or alternative assessment?" are comparable to a debate on whether it is better to live in the city or in the country; each has its advantages, each has its limitations. Where place of residence is concerned, the characteristics of the individual will tip the scales one way or another. Likewise, the characteristics of the learner, the material to be learned, the specific learning context, and the teacher's style can and should affect how well an approach works. Until educators fully accept that no single, universally effective method for all learning situations exists, they are doomed to exhaust themselves in a futile quest for absolutes as they flit from one approach to another. As Ken Goodman (1997) notes, "When people talk to me about cycles and pendulum swings, it helps me to remember that progress is rarely in a straight line and that knowledge takes a long time to be accommodated, absorbed, and put to work" (p. 596). However, keeping this in mind and developing patience with ourselves, our students, and our field as a whole is exceedingly difficult in our fast-paced society.

Far too often, our debates generate more heat than light. At conferences, the best attended and most talked about sessions are those that pit one articulate group of extremists against another. But do such sessions advance quality in educational programs for children, or do they merely advance the reputations of those who argue well in public? Could it be that engaging in such verbal sparring encourages participants to adopt even more extreme positions than those they actually hold, in an effort to entertain the audience? All too often, the pro/con approach deteriorates into little more than a display of intellectual prowess. In *Resisting the Pendulum Swing*, we want to do more than watch opponents charge at one another.

Examining Belief Systems

Why does any educator take a stand on issues, much less choose sides? Mainly, we act upon some combination of aims, values, beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and abilities.

An example that comes to mind involves a former student in my language arts methods course who later became a student teacher. I distinctly remember inviting students in that course to critique "story starters," using as an example one that I consider to be foolish: "If I were a pencil, I would . . ." We talked about the things that impede quality in children's composition; things like writing about assigned topics, writing without revising, trying to write on cut-out shapes, and writing without sharing. When I went to observe the student teacher, however, I found her instructing children to write a story beginning with, "One morning, when I woke up, there was a leprechaun in my room . . . ," insisting that the students complete their writing in 20 minutes, passing around shamrock-shaped paper, and failing to conduct any peer- or teacher-led writing conferences. Just as I was wondering what I accomplish in my methods course, the classroom teacher took me aside to say how "creative" this student teacher was. Clearly, the three of us were operating from different sets of beliefs and expectations.

Although we commonly assume that teaching decisions are an outgrowth of study and training, experiences like mine suggest otherwise. I suspect that belief systems have as much to do with these decisions as does assigned reading or required lesson plans. Eleanor Duckworth (1996) offers keen insight when she talks about how beliefs are formed:

- You may have learned a belief by being told something, or you may have concluded it yourself from evidence that you have been told about, or you may have developed the belief from your own personal evidence.
- An opposing belief is conceivable, and would give rise to different actions, in a situation where the belief is pertinent.
- A belief can be confirmed or disconfirmed by further evidence (yet, evidence that may be confirming or disconfirming to one person may be irrelevant to another).
- A verbal statement of the belief may not really mean that the belief is held. You may enunciate the belief because you think it is expected of you, even though you know you don't believe it, or you may think you believe it although you really don't—it conflicts with some other belief that really determines how you act.

My student had sized up the situation that affected the beliefs and classroom practices where she was teaching. She knew that her co-workers were the ones to please because she was the newcomer. Like a car on a freeway ramp, she had tried to merge safely with ongoing traffic by adjusting her practices to conform with the prevailing belief systems. The hope that I expressed to her during her evaluation conference was that she would be willing to challenge at least some of these assumptions now, and even more so when she has her own classroom. I pointed out to her that the quality of the children's work was the bellwether of success. I shared my records of the children's comments as they carried out her writing assignment: "How do you spell leprechaun?" "Is it okay if I change the beginning and have the leprechaun be outside?" and "Hey, teacher! Listen to mine: One morning I woke up and there was a leprechaun in my bedroom. His name was Pimple" (laughter). These comments were not reflective of genuine engagement in the writing activity, nor was the work produced of high quality (as it had been on an earlier lesson she had taught, the resultant writing assignment now displayed on the bulletin board).

What gives me the courage to put forth an opinion on children's writing is my ability to really see what the children are doing. Like the teachers, administrators, and professors I admire the most, I find that a blend of theory, research, and practice is more compelling than any one of those dimensions pursued or argued in isolation. At a time when scientists are rethinking chaos theory and challenging the postmodernist view that virtually nothing can be truly known (Wilson, 1998), it seems an opportune moment for the education field, which has so often sought to gain stature through affiliation with the "hard" sciences, to think about what we know and how we know it. This, too, is a goal for *Resisting the Pendulum Swing*—to move away from being so tentative about what we know that we resort to taking the path of least resistance.

Thoughtful Explorations of Education Debates

Most educators would like to lay claim to being good thinkers, but what does that mean, exactly? Based upon a review of the research in cognitive psychology (which I adapt here to teachers), we know that good thinkers (Borkowski & Muthukrishna, 1992; Pressley, 1995) and teachers:

- Regard growth of the mind as a gradual process and believe in the value of a carefully deployed effort, rather than expecting to be "finished" as a teacher upon initial certification or after a few years of experience.
- Know and use a large number of learning strategies and match them to specific situations, rather than relying on a very limited repertoire of methods.
- Understand their own learning processes and know the kind and amount of help they need, rather than expecting others to provide shortcuts and simple solutions.
- Possess an appropriate amount of self-confidence and seek new challenges, rather than believing there is nothing more to learn and striving for a life of ease.
- Keep failure in perspective, rather than expecting perfection from themselves.
- Focus on completing tasks, gaining mastery, and lasting value for the learner, rather than on immediate, tangible rewards, and "quick-fixes."
- Imagine themselves in different roles in the near and distant future, and envision new "hoped-for" selves becoming a reality, rather than becoming apathetic and lapsing into dreary routines.

Any of us can be beaten down as thinkers by conditions in the workplace. Few educators have the wherewithal to persist at putting forth ideas when ridiculed, to try and make needed changes when the system seems stacked against us, or to implement innovations when subjected to harsh criticism and constant scrutiny. When educators lose heart because they are disregarded as thinkers, they have succumbed to what psychologists refer to as "learned helplessness," a feeling of powerlessness and resultant apathy (Garber & Seligman, 1980). We do not have answers, and sometimes it even remains a mystery what good questions might be. Fortunately, Deborah Meier (1997) offers a good place to begin with her list of five kinds of questions that the well-educated person raises about the world:

- How do we know what we think we know? What is our evidence? How credible is it?
- Whose viewpoint are we hearing, reading, seeing? What other viewpoints might there be if we changed our position?
- How is one thing connected to another? Is there a pattern here?
- How else might it have been? What if . . . ? Supposing that . . . ?
- What difference does it make? Who cares? (p. 150)

This, then, is another emphasis in our book. We want to support practitioners as they decide to do more than skim the surface of controversy, and instead dig deeper to pursue questions of significance in more thoughtful ways.

Barriers to Informed Perspectives

Often overlooked in discussions of education trends and controversies are the underlying reasons why they are so prone to extremes, swinging back and forth. The sections that follow provide some possible explanations for the pendulum phenomenon. Not surprisingly, what gets in the way of resisting perpetual pendulum swings is very similar to the consequences of failing to think critically (Raths, Wassermann, Jonas, & Rothstein, 1986). I propose that several predictable barriers impede balanced views of education controversies.

Obstacle 1: Naive Faith in the Quick-Fix. Watch television and you will see problems being neatly resolved every 30 minutes. Play sports and the winners and losers are quickly identified. Go to school and subjects often are covered in 30-minute blocks. Both in and out of school, we have come to expect immediate results and tangible rewards. Whenever results are not clear, long-term solutions are necessary, or the payoff is not forthcoming, it is tempting to move on to the next thing. The assumption is that there is one, right answer and that it is our job as educators to perpetually seek it. Yet putting our faith in methods alone only leads to frustration and ceaseless wandering in search of The Answer. The truth is that education questions are more often the intellectual equivalent of essay exams or multiple-choice tests than they are true/false items. It is the very essence of an educator's skill to make appropriate choices for particular learners in specific circumstances. To do otherwise puts us back decades into a factory model of teaching and learning that is neither inclusive nor powerful enough to meet the growing needs of increasingly diverse groups of students.

Obstacle 2: An Indifference to History. A textbook publisher once talked excitedly with me about the "latest thing"—a Web page that would enable students to do practice test items, have them scored, and record the scores. When I noted that the activity sounded much like the programmed learning manuals of the '60s, the publisher reminded me that I wasn't exactly a leading proponent of technology, to which I said, "Just because a workbook has a motor or modem behind it, that doesn't make it a pedagogical innovation." Put bluntly, it is impossible to tell if you are dealing with old wine in new bottles unless you have prior knowledge of old wine. This tendency to see history as irrelevant to modern times creates the illusion that each new "innovation" sprang pure and fully formed from the minds of contemporaries. Moreover, a lack of historical perspective also interferes with gradual, steady progress by making us unaware when an "innovation" is merely a recycled brainstorm from the past. Interestingly, after I looked at the Web-based study guide, I had to admit that it was more appealing and interactive than the workbooks of the past. But is this just a superficial response to the "new toy" appeal of the Web, or will these tools actually facilitate student learning? It remains to be seen.

Obstacle 3: A Passion for Action. When problems arise, educators want to *do* something. In that rush into action, however, they can miss the meaning or arrive at a premature conclusion. As Stacie Goffin (1996) observes,

> Certainty (or at least its illusion) also can be beneficial when in conversation with those who make policy. The world of policy is less admiring of the flexibility of thought valued in academia. Policymakers and other significant decision makers usually seek specific actions that, when broadly implemented, will effect change; hence, they tend to be interested in determining what they can do, rather than in pondering multiple interpretations available on a particular issue. (p. 126)

There is a certain anti-intellectualism in our field that gets in the way of delving deeper into issues or even formulating good questions. A classroom teacher is more likely to ask, "If a kindergarten child cries every morning, what can I do to stop it?" rather than reflect, "I wonder why this child is crying every day. I have some hunches and I'm going to try to find out." Likewise, university faculty who want to "live the question" frequently are dismissed as dreamers or ivory tower dwellers. When a group of educators assembled to discuss effective teaching and a professor suggested, "First, we need to define what we mean by effective teaching," the others in the group insisted that there wasn't time to waste on philosophical discussions. Yet, in the absence of guiding principles and a shared vision, the group floundered and remained so unproductive that everyone regretted agreeing to participate. When educators rush into action before getting focused, they merely give the outward *appearance* of doing something, without actually getting to the heart of the matter (Hargreaves, 1997).

Obstacle 4: Confidence in Consumerism. Educators have a misplaced confidence in things that will solve their problems—a new piece of software, a new reading series, a different test to administer. But human problems require human solutions. Although purchasing something useful makes sense, it will never replace the intelligence and interpersonal skills required to make significant progress toward education goals. As a profession, we need to stop confusing means with ends. An assessment plan is not the title of a standardized test, as many school administrators will reply if asked. Nor does the basal series' publisher's name define the reading program. Americans are wont to think that if only they could find the right product, their problems would miraculously disappear. Although it is true that education is generally underfunded, materials and equipment are inadequate, and class sizes are too large, it is raising false hopes to intimate that a national shopping spree in education could, in and of itself, resolve every education challenge we face. American educators' confidence in competition and capitalism as cure-alls needs to be challenged if we are to regain our balance.

Obstacle 5: Ignoring International Perspectives. On a visit to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, I visited a public school. The school was located in a clearing in the lush vegetation, and boasted a thatched roof and rough-hewn benches. Seated on those benches was a group of about forty 1st-graders. The teacher's materials consisted of a chalkboard, chalk, and items gathered from the natural surroundings. Educators from other parts of the world would likely find this setting deficient. But what intrigued me the most was this question: "Why is it the case that these children are happy to be in school and able to focus their attention when, with all the materials and resources we have, American children frequently are bored or distracted?" Far too often, American educators assume that there is nothing to be learned from nations that are small and/or struggling economically and, conversely, that other large, wealthy nations are our competitors. Despite incessant criticism of American public education, a nationalistic spirit persists and interferes with our ability to truly learn from one another's mistakes and achievements at the international level. Even when we do become intrigued by education innovations in other parts of the word, we tend to focus on superficial attributes, rather than on the essential characteristics. A embarrassing example is the American response to British open education that led to the construction of rooms without walls, but which failed to incorporate an open curriculum. The "ugly American" stereotype sometimes applies to the education field as well when we approach other education systems with the arrogant attitude that "ours has to be better," and judge any classroom that isn't decorated like Disney World as inferior. Until we begin to learn from one another on a global scale, our progress as a profession will be erratic or even stalled.

Obstacle 6: Promoting Personal Agendas. Yet another influence that gets in the way of informed perspectives is the educators' personal agendas. School administrators often are pushed into using public relations tactics and sometimes resort to shameless self-promotion in order to survive the demands of their school districts and communities. Education consultants and college faculty may seize upon a hot topic and wring as much recognition and remuneration out of it as they can by urging those in basic education to join in the frenzy. In tumultuous times, practitioners learn to survive by avoiding controversy and going along with the program, at least superficially. In an environment of self-preservation where administrators are trying to make points, education consultants are trying to make money, and teachers are clinging to their jobs like life rafts, children end up being the losers.

Obstacle 7: Mistrust Between Basic and Higher Education. Now that it is popular to speak of genuine collaboration between colleges/universities and public schools, it seems almost heretical to point out that equal, enduring partnerships between basic and higher education are not commonplace. Traditional relationships between basic and higher education, in which the schools serve as sites for professors' research or the teachers serve as the recipients of short-term staff development activities, continue to dominate in most districts (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997). When I talk with teachers, I note that they are prone to using military allusions to describe their situations (e.g., "We're out here in the trenches," "Every day, you're on the firing line") and are apt to conclude that university professors do not understand the compromises they are forced to make. Likewise, many of the scholars/professors I know who are steeped in theory and research use other kinds of phrases to explain why they no longer agree to conduct teacher in-service training (e.g., "It ends up only being 'What do I do Monday?' " and "They just want to 'sit and get' ideas"). A climate of mistrust and fear develops when teachers are portrayed by professors as relatively unconcerned with the underlying rationale for learning activities, and when professors are portrayed by basic educators as being so immersed in their books that they are out of touch with the "real world" of teaching. Each group fears that the other will be harshly critical of them in private and disrespect their particular type of knowledge and contributions to the field. As McDonald (1992) asserts,

> If we could rout the idea that teaching is only about skill and method, if we could foster a public perception of its moral complexity, if we could honor the role played in teaching by the teacher's productively ambivalent self, then I think we would have a chance to build the kind of schools our children and grandchildren will need in the twenty-first century. (p. 6).

Lasting progress in education is dependent upon educators taking down their defenses and engaging in an ongoing dialogue about what it means to teach and learn.

Given the typical educator's fascination with quick fixes, disinterest in history, propensity to take action, faith in consumerism, inclination to be nationalistic, and/or tendency to pursue personal agendas, it is not surprising that the education field is faddish and fragmented. In 1989, Robert Slavin described the cycle of education innovation. The upstroke of the pendulum was marked by the proposal of a program in the popular press, which was then piloted without adequate research, introduced in school districts with a reputation for innovation, and promoted nationally. With controlled evaluations and their resultant findings, the downstroke of the pendulum begins. The innovation's demise is imminent when innovative districts move on to the next project, complaints begin to surface, preliminary evaluations prove disappointing, and developers rush to defend their programs, insisting that they were poorly implemented. Finally, interest in the innovation virtually disappears just as the results of controlled evaluation studies are published and educators abandon the idea in favor of a new one.

In the past 10 years, surprisingly little has happened to halt this ebb and flow of ideas, innovations, and projects. We are, if anything, witnessing an ever more rapid cycle of superficial changes despite efforts to intensify our education terminology, such as the move from "change" to "reform" and then "restructuring." Perhaps one way to regain our moorings as a field is to stop and take stock of our current position, and to assess what we have learned so far before launching yet another project on the next tide. Practitioners who find themselves caught in the maelstrom of education controversies need to know "the state of the art" on the issues as a way to steady themselves. Our book is a modest effort to get our bearings by identifying areas of disagreement on the map of education ideologies and, having done so, to consider new destinations in which conciliation is reasonable, concerted effort is a given, and a vision of steady progress for education stands before us like land on the horizon.

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CHAPTER 1—CENSORSHIP

Evaluating Quality Without Imposing Agendas

Anne Drolett Creany

A 5th-grade teacher receives a call from an angry parent demanding to know why, considering the "offensive" language contained therein, the teacher is using the book Bridge to Terabithia *(Paterson, 1977) in her child's classroom. After the teacher reports the incident, the principal and a review committee study the complaint and uphold the parent's request to stop using the book.*

A 1st-grade teacher finds an old copy of The Story of Little Black Sambo *in her classroom library and removes it without telling anyone, rationalizing that the book is no longer in print and that children should not be exposed to its racist illustrations.*

Beverly Naidoo (1986), author of Journey to Jo'burg, *mails copies of her book to her sister-in-law in South Africa. The South African Controller of Customs and Excise seizes the book, which portrays the effects of apartheid, explaining that* Journey to Jo'burg *has been deemed undesirable and is prohibited.*

The aforementioned incidents illustrate a growing trend in education: Efforts to censor children's reading material are increasing and originate from a variety of sources. In the 1977-1978 school year, the American Library Association's Office on Intellectual Freedom reported 300 attempts to censor books (Bryson & Detty, 1982). In 1991, 514 challenges were reported, and in 1994 that number grew to 760 challenges (Micklos, 1995). Krug (1996) claims that 3,500 challenges to library and curricular materials were received from 1990 to 1995. Such numbers may not indicate the extent of the problem, however. Krug estimates that for every reported challenge, four or five may go unreported, often out of the desire to avoid controversy.

The United States is not alone in facing an increase in censorship. In Canada, David Jenkinson surveyed Manitoba schools to determine how frequently children's books were challenged. He noted an increase from 25 percent of schools reporting challenges between 1982-1984 to 33 percent reporting challenges between 1991-1993 (Saltman, 1998). New Zealand also has experienced increases in challenges to reading material for children ever since schools came under the control of parent-elected boards, rather than the Department of Education (Gibbons, 1996). Concerns about sexuality, swearing, and the supernatural—commonly referred to as the "s" words—are common in New Zealand. Many adults in Australia and Canada would add violence to the list of characteristics considered to be offensive in reading material for children.

This chapter will examine the nature of censorship; who the censors are and what offends them; what censors want; and what effects censors' actions have on authors, editors, publishers, educators, and children. It also will examine various aspects of the controversy as it exists in the U.S. and worldwide, identify the implications of censorship, and make recommendations for educators who must cope with this issue.

Defining Censorship

Censorship is the removal, suppression, or restricted circulation of literary, artistic, or educational material (images, ideas, and/or information) on the grounds that the material is morally or otherwise objectionable (Reichman, 1988). As such, censorship is not a recent phenomenon. The word originated with the office of censor, a Roman official whose job was to uphold morality and restrict misconduct (Wynne, 1985). Examples of censorship can be found as early as 389 B.C., when Plato recommended monitoring the tales of Homer and other fiction writers (Hansen, 1987).

Saltman (1998) states that throughout history, individuals have voiced strong opinions about children's books and stories that they considered to be unsuitable or immoral. She notes, for example, that 17th-century Puritans found tales of giants and magic to be objectionable, and that philosopher John Locke bemoaned fairy tales' lack of moral instruction. Similarly, in Victorian times, Sarah Trimmer, renowned as the "spiritual guardian" of children, soundly reproved books that simply excited children's imaginations, but failed to improve their hearts or understanding. Such concern about the influence of books on children's development continues today. Books are described as powerful socializing agents (Weitzman, Eiffer, Hokada, & Ross, 1972) and, as such, certain books are perceived as harmful influences that must be kept out of children's hands.

The Censors

Who are today's censors and what bothers them? Most censors would not recognize themselves if they looked in the mirror. As DelFattore (1992) points out, a censor is a second or third person verb; it is never first person. I select or protect; you censor. At its extreme, the label of censor applies to persons whose objective is to remove from the store of human knowledge that with which they disagree. Many of the objectors and critics described in this chapter do not wish to completely remove the information. Instead, their goal is to protect or prevent schoolchildren from exposure to certain ideas, topics, or forms of language. For simplicity's sake, this chapter will apply the term "censor" to anyone who attempts to limit children's access to ideas or reading material that conflict with the censor's beliefs.

Typically, censors express their feelings in the form of a challenge to some written work. Not all of their challenges, it should be noted, result in removal of a literary work. The fear of controversy or unpleasantness, however, may cause an educator to refrain from using a book with a group of students. Therefore, more subtle forms of censorship can have the same results as the more overt forms.

Contemporary censors are found all along the political spectrum, from extreme right to far left and virtually every point in between. Regardless of their political leanings, censors actually may have much in common with each other. Like their counterparts from the past, the majority of today's censors are committed to protecting children from harmful ideas and to providing them with reading material that will be beneficial. They may differ drastically, however, on what they consider harmful or beneficial and also in terms of the range of influence they seek to wield. The censor is seldom satisfied to remove or ban materials for one child; rather, it is the censor's agenda to set policy for large numbers of children.

Challenges From the Left

Those who hold liberal social attitudes maintain that all facets of society should be reflected in children's books and educational materials, including such troubling social issues as drug use, homelessness, and poverty. Liberals tend to support media depictions of individuals with disabilities as well as of nontraditional families, including single-parent families, foster families, or gay and lesbian families (Saltman, 1998).

As a rule, liberals advocate greater inclusion, not removal of topics. Nevertheless, it is only logical that if more emphasis is given to one topic, there will be less attention given to another (DelFattore, 1992). There are some liberal censors, furthermore, who demand the removal of books that are contrary to their viewpoints, such as books that seem to glorify violence and war. Taken to its extreme, this constitutes intellectual terrorism. As DelFattore (1992) states, "Once a culture decides that the truth can be suppressed because it is offensive to someone, all that remains is a trial of strength to determine whose sensibilities take precedence" (p. 8).

Special Interest Groups

Children's literature seems to be especially vulnerable as a target for censors with a variety of political agendas. For example, several schools and libraries in Great Britain banned Roald Dahl's (1983) book *Witches* because it cast females in a bad light. The book also was criticized by Wicca, an organization of witches in the United States, for its unflattering depiction of witches (Dahl, 1997). The same organization also objected to the folktale *Hansel and Gretel*, because it insinuated that burning witches and taking their possessions was acceptable (McClure, 1995). Another organization, the Fraternal Order of Police, objected to a picture book by cartoonist William Steig (1969), *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. Their efforts to ban the book were spurred by the fact that the animal chosen to play the role of the policeman was a pig; at the time, Vietnam war protesters were referring to police officers as "pigs." In the U.S., the lumber industry was offended by Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* because it argued against deforestation (Pottorf & Olthof, 1993). The book *Families* (Tax, 1996), which shows many family configurations, was villified for glorifying divorce and for portraying two female adults, whom objectors perceived as a lesbian couple. The opposite viewpoint was demonstrated in Cambridge, England, where the social department of the city council declared that children's books that portrayed nuclear families should not be read to kindergarten children to prevent children of single-parent families from feeling upset (Haugaard, 1996). Multicultural literature has brought considerable additional controversy to the field of children's literature.

Debates Over Multicultural Literature

During the 1960s, several significant social movements made their mark on education and on children's literature. The civil rights movement prompted educators and other concerned individuals to examine how people of color were represented in children's textbooks and trade books. This examination revealed that persons from historically oppressed groups were both underrepresented and misrepresented in school materials and children's literature. Similar findings emerged with regard to gender—females were represented less often than males, presented stereotypically, and/or relegated to support roles (e.g., as cheerleaders rather than as team members). Concern about these findings led to the development of multicultural education curricula and a demand for multicultural literature. These changes contributed to "a long overdue opening up of American literature and culture in general to the voices of long silenced groups" (Taxel, 1997, p. 421).

As more books portraying ethnic and racial minorities appeared, reviewers appraised the material for suitability. One such reviewer was the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC), which examined books for evidence of racism and sexism. Eventually, other "isms" were evaluated as well, including ageism, elitism, and materialism. Evaluation criteria included searching for inaccurate, culturally insensitive, or unflattering portrayals of racial or ethnic groups and/or females. Examples of multicultural books that received harsh criticism included:

- *Sounder* (Armstrong, 1969), a Newbery Award-winning book, which was criticized for portraying a nameless sharecropper's family passively enduring social injustices.
- *The Indian in the Cupboard* (Banks, 1985), for depicting a Native American character stereotypically.
- *The Cay* (Taylor, 1969), for its depiction of a black man's submissive attentions to a white child protagonist.

It is worth noting that each of these examples was written by an author who did not belong to the racial group portrayed in the book.

As an increasing number of authors began to write about cultures other than their own, critics impugned those who wrote without a complete understanding of the history, reality, and nuances of a culture (Sims Bishop, 1993; Harris, 1993). Seto (1995) stated unequivocally,

> I feel very strongly that it is morally wrong for Euro-American authors to "steal" from other cultures in order to jump on the multicultural bandwagon, unless they have direct, personal experience in the country where that culture originates—more than simply being a tourist doing research in the library. (p. 112)

Many authors and educators share Seto's opinions.

Children's book authors Kathryn Lasky and Hazel Rochman react strongly to such criticism. Rochman (1993) denounces what she calls politically correct watchdogs and bullies. Lasky (1996) also levels the charge of political correctness against those who would insist that "certain stories must unfold against specific backdrops that are consonant with their source" (p. 4). In addition, Lasky expresses concern that authors are being discouraged from writing stories about cultures other than their own. She believes that limiting stories to one voice and one version constitutes censorship. While acknowledging an author's responsibility to provide accuracy and authenticity, Lasky asserts that membership in a particular ethnic group does not guarantee a book's authenticity. Furthermore, she states that such insistence undermines the ultimate standard by which literature should be judged—its literary merit.

Children's literature expert Violet Harris (1996) discounts Lasky's claims that authors of color are exerting undue influence over who is allowed to write what, noting that the children's book publishing industry is overwhelmingly under the control of whites. Harris adds that she considers a more pressing problem to be the "near impossibility" of authors of color to write about "nonracial" issues (p. 115).

Tax (1997) believes that the debate about cultural authenticity in multicultural literature is legitimate, but fears that it may provide impetus for those who would like to abandon multicultural literature altogether. Taxel (1995) contends that debates on political correctness have devolved into attacks on multiculturalism, and that they undermine the progress of women's and civil rights groups. McCarthy (1991) concurs, observing that political conservatives have proclaimed the value of Eurocentrism and Western culture in their struggle to exert control over educational curriculum and reform. Indeed, of all the voices clamoring to have their opinions about schooling and children's reading materials heard, perhaps most audible are the censors associated with the political right.

Challenges From the Right

DelFattore (1992) points specifically to 1980, the year Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States, as the beginning of an increasing assault on reading material and textbooks. Most of the challenges reflect the ideology of the conservative right, paralleling an increase in ultraconservative activism that Apple (1993) calls the "Conservative Restoration." Apple states that "one of the hallmarks of the conservative agenda is its unremitting attack on education" (p. 3).

According to Cope and Kalantzis (1993), ultraconservatives have created the illusion of a crisis in order to demand a reconstruction of the education "agenda" to suit their own purposes. This crisis atmosphere lends credence to the belief that society is experiencing a collapse of values—a collapse that ultraconservatives blame upon the schools. Several conservative groups are well-funded and highly organized, utilizing mass mailings, media advertising, and distribution of literature through fundamentalist church groups. Groups such as Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, Phyllis Schafly's Eagle Forum, The Gablers' Educational Research Analysts Inc., Simmonds' Citizens for Excellence in Education, Citizens Organized for Better Schools, and Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed's Christian Coalition urge their followers to resist any type of education reform, such as whole language, cooperative learning, and outcomes-based education, and to seek removal of certain textbooks and library materials (Taxel, 1997). By and large, these conservative groups have been quite successful in promoting their agendas.

Taxel (1997) attributes their success to several factors. First, conservative leaders capitalize on parents' inclination to believe that the way they were taught is best and that their children should be taught the same way. Second, procedures or materials that are deemed objectionable are evaluated out of context. Third, inflammatory rhetoric is used to incite peoples' emotions and to serve as a rallying cry. Materials that critically analyze a country's past or present policies are viewed as unpatriotic, presentation of nontraditional families is considered anti-family, and any challenge to authority figures is termed heretical. Some conservatives believe that school materials teach a "religion" of secular humanism that is pitted against Christianity. They would consider the teaching of environmental issues, for example, to be a tenet of secular humanism. The conservative fundamental view is that such teaching denies God's will—for example, if God wants the whales to live, they will. Otherwise, it is human effrontery to interfere with divine plans for a species.

Objections by conservative fundamentalist groups have led to several federal court cases. In *What Johnny Can't Read,* DelFattore (1992) describes eight of these protracted cases. In one case, a mother objected to the district's use of the reading series *Impressions* (Booth et al., 1984). This mother felt that passages in certain stories contradicted her religious beliefs. After a conservative group lent her its support, additional objectionable passages in the textbook were identified. After four years of courtroom hearings and appeals, the court ruled against the censors. It appeared that a victory over censorship was achieved. By the time the case was settled, however, a new version of the series was on the market that contained fewer of the controversial passages (DelFattore, 1992). In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Traw (1996) also experienced the organized efforts of conservative groups to remove the *Impressions* reading series from use. The protesters in this case did not go to court, but instead held extensive reviews, hearings, and public debates. Eventually, although the school district decided to retain the earlier edition of the series, the publisher ceased to offer the series in the United States.

The Sioux Falls protesters objected to the supernatural elements of the series, particularly as evident in mythological stories from non-Christian cultures—stories they perceived as violent, troubling, or anti-authoritarian. Traw surmises that a hint of racism accompanied the protesters' objections to the folktales of Africa, Native America, and the Far East. The protesters expressed concerns that several stories about other cultures were "un-American."

While many conservative efforts to censor materials have not fared well in the U.S. legal court system, they do have an effect, both on school districts and on publishers who seek to avoid controversy.

Effects of Censorship

Regardless of motivation or political agenda, the effect of censors' efforts on authors, publishers, editors, teachers, librarians, and ultimately children is insidious and profound. According to Dudley-Marling and Murphy (1997), persistent legal harassment has prompted many school districts and teachers to engage in self-censorship in an attempt to avoid angry confrontation and the attendant negative publicity. O'Neal (1990, p. 771) describes this tendency as "beat the censor."

Little has been written about such self-censorship or "silent censorship" (Person, 1998, p. 119). Librarians are reluctant to discuss this issue, as are school personnel. In many ways, it is easier to cope with censorship that is out in the open and recognizable than it is to address concealed censorship practices that justify exclusion of certain titles on the basis of "selection." Teachers and librarians need to consider to what extent purchasing decisions are influenced by fear of controversy (Person, 1998).

Teachers who face censorship of their instructional materials tend to respond in one of two ways. If there are no policies to follow or if they do not receive strong support from the administration, teachers may quietly acquiesce and stop using the challenged material. Or, they may follow established procedures in their district and fight the charges. Either way, the experience is jolting. Noll (1994) conducted a survey of middle school, junior high school, and high school English teachers in seven states who had been subjected to incidents of censorship. The challenged materials varied, as did the nature of the challenge and how it was handled. For the most part, teachers reacted very cautiously to the threat of censorship. They also expressed deep concern about the cost of self-censorship. One teacher stated

> When people of any age are too afraid of saying, doing, or reading something wrong, the tendency is to . . . withdraw into a frozen state of immobility; then learning dies. Fearful silence . . . would seem to do more harm than any speech or text I can imagine! (Noll, 1994, p. 62)

Authors whose work has been subject to the challenges of censors also are deeply affected by the experience. Daniel Keys (1997), author of *Flowers for Algernon*, notes that censorship has a chilling effect—authors begin to question their choice of words. Author Judy Blume (1997) speaks of censorship by editors, offering as an example the publicizing of her book *Forever* as an adult, rather than a young adult, novel. Publisher Steven Roxburgh (1997) expresses his concern that controversial material is watered down or eliminated because publishers, editors, authors, and illustrators who fear economic losses subconsciously render decisions about children's books in anticipation of objections.

Recommendations

Selection Policy. How should educators cope with incidents of censorship? Several recommendations seem worth consideration. First, develop a materials selection policy (Huck, Hepler, Hickman, & Keifer, 1997; McClure, 1995; Person, 1998; Traw, 1996). The Library Bill of Rights (American Library Association, 1996) suggests that each district and school within the district develop a written policy that explicitly describes criteria and procedures for selection of books and materials. Person (1998) notes that this policy alone can defuse many censorship efforts.

Responsible implementation of the selection policy clearly requires a thorough and current knowledge of the educational materials and children's literature being considered. Furthermore, selection criteria should be based upon literary excellence, taking into account general guidelines provided by such professional organizations as the

American Library Association (ALA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the International Reading Association (IRA) (Jalongo & Creany, 1991). Reviews of specific titles in professional journals such as *The Horn Book, Language Arts, The Reading Teacher, Booklist*, and *School Library Journal* can be helpful to a selection committee (McClure, 1995). The selection process is most effective if the selection committee involves faculty and staff who are knowledgeable in various content areas (Person, 1998), teachers from various grade levels, administrators, and parents (Traw, 1996).

Communicate With Parents and Community. Obviously, parents have a right to be informed about the materials used in their children's classrooms. Parents who are concerned about the materials have the right to protect their children from materials they consider inappropriate, and schools should accommodate those rights by providing alternative reading assignments in those incidences. However, parents do not have the right to determine the suitability of materials for all children (McClure, 1995).

Parents who are alarmed by censorist rhetoric frequently can be reassured about the value of specific books when teachers or librarians make known why and how they plan to use the books in their classrooms (Jalongo & Creany, 1991; McClure, 1995). Micklos (1995) suggests saving a range of student reactions to specific books so that teachers can demonstrate the diversity of responses to literature. Such responses can illuminate for parents and community members that the content they find objectionable is either not evident to children or that it is outweighed by other valuable aspects of the book.

Another aspect of community involvement is the creation of a dialogue about intellectual freedom. Such a dialogue will raise awareness of the issues and challenges involved in maintaining such freedom and also will serve as a base of support in the event that organized challenges arise (Micklos, 1995; Traw, 1996).

Teaching Critical Literacy. Apple (1993) argues that the aim of education should be to create not "functional literacy," but rather "critical literacy" that promotes the growth of genuine understanding and full participation in the culture. The ability to critically evaluate literature can be fostered in young children when they are asked to compare/contrast different versions of the same book (Jalongo & Creany, 1991). For example, students who compare versions of folktales told from the perspective of different characters such as A. J. Wolf in *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Scieszka, 1989) are learning to appreciate how divergent viewpoints affect a story. Yenika-Agbaw (1997) descibes how older elementary students can examine the politics of oppression by contrasting the celebration of the same holiday as experienced by the slaves and the plantation owners in *Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters* (McKissack & McKissack, 1994).

Facing Challenges. Despite discussion about intellectual freedom and the need to foster children's ability to discern the worth of various texts, censorship is certain to occur. In an era of increasing diversity and perspectives in education, the issue is not what to do *if* a censorship challenge is issued but what to do *when* censorship occurs.

The first step is to respect the right of individuals to question materials used in schools and treat the complainant with respect. Many concerns can be resolved at this initial stage by hearing out parents' concerns and sharing with them the process of selecting a particular book or curricular material.

"Common Ground," a brochure prepared by the National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association Joint Task Force on Intellectual Freedom, suggests that if the complainants decide to pursue the challenge after the initial meeting, they should be given a form to request reconsideration of a book. Such a form is available from *The Student's Right To Know,* a publication of the National Council of Teachers of English (The Committee on the Right to Read, 1982). This form, and variations of it, requires that the objectors read the book in its entirety and then articulate their specific objections. This step often deters all but the most committed objectors (Jalongo & Creany, 1991).

If the complainant proceeds, the next step is to review the complaint, adhering strictly to district policy. The review committee, like the selection committee, should have a broad base (McClure, 1995) and consist of teachers from various content areas and grade levels, as well as librarians, administrators, and community members. "Common Ground" proposes that the community be informed of the challenge and that the review process be conducted openly. Traw (1996) suggests that schools faced with organized efforts to censor should enlist the aid of all resources at the local, state, and national levels. He suggests contacting professional groups such as IRA, NCTE, People for the American Way, ALA's Freedom to Read Foundation, and the Parent Teacher Association. He also provides names and addresses of contact persons at each of these organizations (p. 56).

Once the challenge is resolved, the public should be informed about the results. This is probably also a good time for schools to evaluate their selection and review process, and to clarify any ambiguous procedures. It is also a time for educators to reaffirm their determination to avoid self-censorship, and to renew their commitment to the student's right to read, to intellectual freedom, and to the need to offer educational materials that feature a diversity of opinions and voices.

Conclusion

Censorship is a complex issue, rife with paradox and influenced by a variety of agendas—political, economic, and social. Frequently, these agendas conflict, prompting censors to insist not only on the maintenance of their point of view, but also on suppressing or eliminating those they find disagreeable. What censors have in common is their certainty that only their viewpoint is valid; exposing children to ideas that differ from theirs is repugnant. What liberal and conservative censors alike fail to recognize, however, is that a commitment to democratic principles requires a tolerance of opinions that may not be endorsed by the majority. After all, a democracy is based on the free exchange of ideas—all points of view should be represented. Educators in a democracy must prepare children to critically evaluate various opinions, to recognize propaganda and bias, and to make informed decisions. Such a stance takes courage. It also demands preparation and information when the censors appear at the classroom door.

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CHAPTER 2—INCLUSION

Celebrating Contributions While Meeting New Challenges

Kay A. Chick and Deborah M. Clawson

Tanya, an energetic and social 5-year-old, has Down Syndrome. She goes to kindergarten in the same neighborhood school that her older sisters and brother attend. A special educator comes into Tanya's kindergarten for 45 minutes each morning to assist her and several other children as the kindergarten teacher reads a story and presents a language activity.

Kenny, who is 7, is autistic. Kenny attended regular kindergarten and 1st grade in his home school, and he will be in a typical 2nd-grade class next fall. Kenny often is reluctant to move from one activity to the next, even as part of a familiar routine. Kenny has an individual behavior support plan in which he earns "bonus" points when he makes such a transition without complaint. Kenny often uses these "bonus" points for extra time on one of the classroom computers. An instructional assistant is assigned to Kenny's classroom. Although she gives Kenny verbal cues related to moments of transition (e.g., "Kenny, it's time to put your math journal away"), she works with all of the students in Kenny's class.

Alycia, a 3rd-grader, has a mild hearing loss. During classroom instruction, Alycia uses a low-gain auditory trainer. When Alycia's teacher is presenting information to the entire class, Alycia wears a receiver while the teacher wears a microphone clipped to her neckline to amplify verbal instructions. Alycia's teacher keeps the auditory trainer on her desk when it is not in use, and Alycia retrieves the system when it is needed again.

These three students receive adaptations and the individualized support they need to learn in inclusive school settings. In the United States, and in many other countries, more and more students with disabilities are receiving their education in "regular" preschool and public school environments—that is, school environments that include their nondisabled peers.

For nearly 30 years, educators have called for a re-examination of separate special education services for students with disabilities. This movement has been supported by current research that suggests inclusive education—educating students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers—is preferable to segregated education (Hundert, Mahoney, Mundy, & Vernon, 1998; Okagaki, Diamond, Kontos, & Hestenes, 1998). Inclusion is rooted in the belief that we must value human diversity and abandon the idea that only "normal" children can contribute to society (Kunc, 1992).

Advocacy of inclusive education is not limited to the United States. In 1994, a World Conference on Special Needs Education, representing 92 governments and 25 international organizations, adopted the "Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education." This statement said, in part, that "regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating disciminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, . . . and achieving education for all" (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii-ix).

In this chapter we will examine the controversies surrounding inclusion, as well as their implications for the future of special needs children in inclusive settings; describe differing views on inclusive education; examine the relationship between inclusion and other school reform initiatives; and discuss elements essential to successful inclusion.

Definition of Terms

Terms related to the education of students with disabilities are:

Inclusion. Inclusion refers to the belief that educational services to students with disabilities may be provided in regular preschool and public education settings, with supplementary aids and services available for those who need them to benefit from the educational program (*National Study of Inclusive Education*, 1995).

> Inclusion is a process of meshing general and special education reform initiatives and strategies in order to achieve a unified system of public education that incorporates all children and youth as active, fully participating members of the school community; that views diversity as the norm; and that insures a high-quality education for each student by providing meaningful curriculum, effective teaching, and necessary supports for each student. (Ferguson, 1995, p. 286)

IDEA. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 105-17) is the re-authorization of the original Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This federal legislation guarantees a free, appropriate public education for all students identified as having a disability, and requires that each student's individualized education program be provided in the least restrictive environment.

The Source of the Controversy

A continuing controversy surrounds the inclusion of children with special needs in regular education settings. The Council for Exceptional Children has voiced concerns about inclusion, and the American Federation of Teachers has called for a moratorium on full inclusion (Weir, 1998). Many other educators have documented their reservations about the practices of inclusive education (Baines, Baines, & Masterson, 1994;

Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994/95; Kauffman, Lloyd, Baker, & Riedel, 1995; Shanker, 1994/95). Other professionals are valiant supporters of the movement (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994/95; Ferguson, 1995; Roach, 1995). The basis of the controversy emerges from an examination of the historical movement toward inclusive education.

The Movement Toward Inclusion

Over the past decade, many authors have asked, "What is so 'special' about special education?" Researchers, practitioners, and advocates have expressed growing dissatisfaction over special education's costs, the effects of labels on students, the disproportionate placement of minority students into special education programs, and the less-than-desirable student outcomes (Roach, 1995). Public schools are now examining other methods for meeting the needs of at-risk students and children with disabilities, including pre-referral interventions, collaborative consultations between regular and special education teachers, and inclusive education. Inclusion, although more of a philosophy of education than a program model (Kunc, 1992), is at the very center of these education reform initiatives (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989).

The availability of services for students with special needs varies dramatically from country to country, with direct correlations between the economic and social development of the country and the quality of its special education services (Li & Altman, 1997). In some countries, the education of children with disabilities simply does not exist (Martin, 1997). In others, such as Brazil, services for students with physical impairments and vision or hearing problems are provided in special education classrooms, while students with learning disabilities go unidentified in regular classrooms (Kerns & Cavalcante, 1997). The majority of Canadian provinces support inclusion, although separate programs continue to be available for students with behavior disorders (Schwean, Saklofske, & Shatz, 1996). In Italy, inclusion has been mandated for more than 20 years; however, additional steps may have made this mandate more palatable to Italian educators and the general public. Classrooms in Italy cannot have more than one student with a disability, excluding those with learning disabilities. In addition, if a student with a disability is present, there can be no more than 20 students in the class (Cornoldi, Tessini, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1997). Currently, Vermont leads the way in the United States in inclusive education, with 83 percent of students with disabilities included, compared to a national average of 36 percent (Thousand & Villa, 1995).

Although it is apparent that educators around the world are moving toward more inclusive education, many parents, teachers, and administrators oppose the education of students with disabilities in regular classrooms. The controversy becomes even more apparent when one examines differing views and specific research on inclusion and the relationship between the issue and school reform.

Differing Views on Inclusion

Proponent Views. Supporters of inclusive schooling argue that inclusion is a civil right, that students with disabilities are more like their peers than they are different, and that students with disabilities can benefit from the regular education curriculum, as long as needed supports are provided. Shapiro and his colleagues (1993), in telling the story of one student, illustrate the danger in believing that students who are labeled as disabled are fundamentally different from other students. Billy Hawkins spent the first 15 years of his life labeled as "educable mentally retarded." As a back-up quarterback in a high school game, Hawkins helped his team come from behind and secure a victory. Shortly thereafter, he was transferred from special education into regular education, where he received extra help from his teachers. Hawkins went on to attend college and complete a Ph.D., and is currently the Associate Dean of the School of Education at Michigan's Ferris State University. Proponents of inclusion argue that the resources of special education can be delivered in inclusive settings, and can benefit both those students who are identified as disabled and those who, although not labeled, need additional support (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987). Students with special needs actually do better in regular classes than comparable students do in special education settings (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994/95). Specific to students with learning disabilities, research indicates that students who participated in regular classroom settings made more progress in reading than did students who were in special education settings. In mathematics, students in regular and special classrooms made similar progress (McLeskey & Waldron, 1995). Thus, evidence indicates that, under the right conditions, inclusive classroom environments are superior to segregated special education settings for the majority of students with disabilities.

A basic premise of those who support inclusion is that special education is not a place, but rather a largely flexible set of supports that can follow a student into regular education settings. Students with disabilities are as diverse as any other group of students, and the achievement of a supportive learning environment where diversity is valued would benefit all students (Stainback & Stainback, 1992).

Opponent Views. Opponents of inclusive schooling suggest that inclusion is primarily an attempt to avoid spending the necessary funds on services for students (Lewis, 1992). They further suggest that regular educators have neither the training nor the resources to teach students with such diverse learning needs, and that inclusion represents a "one-size-fits-all" approach to education that is neither realistic nor appropriate for students with disabilities. Those who are less than enthusiastic about inclusion point to cases such as the suburban Texas teacher who had to leave 35 students unsupervised whenever a special needs student in the class needed to use the bathroom. This teacher also single-handedly built a modified desk for the student's wheelchair and planned an individualized instruction to meet the student's academic needs. These conditions led to the teacher's "burnout" and eventual resignation (Baines, Baines, & Masterson, 1994).

Albert Shanker, Past President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), wrote that when inclusion is mandated in the same way that separate placement options were mandated in the past, the result is a loss of a genuine continuum of options based on students' individual needs. Shanker described full inclusion as a "one-size-fits-all" approach and contended that research data supporting the claims of benefits to students is insufficient. Students with disabilities should have access to a range of placements, he wrote, including placement in separate classes with special educators who are experienced in individualizing instruction, in selecting from a variety of instructional techniques and motivational strategies, and in tailoring progress reporting systems to the students' particular needs (Shanker, 1994/95).

Opponents of inclusion also cite research on inclusion that suggests inclusive education has small to moderate benefits for the academic and social outcomes of students with disabilities. Opponents suggest that the presence of students with disabilities intrudes on the learning of typical students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994/95; Kaufman et al., 1995).

Despite these differing views on inclusion, the question no longer is whether to include students with disabilities in regular education environments, but rather how to provide inclusive education that is meaningful for students and manageable for educators. The resulting restructuring of traditional, segregated special education programs must be addressed in the larger context of overall education reform and restructuring.

Inclusion and Other School Reform Issues

The inclusion of children with special needs in regular education settings is linked intimately to issues of school reform and restructuring. According to Shanker (1988), "education has never worked well for more than 20% of our children." While this statement is debatable, we do know that educators have worked for several decades to institute lasting reform. Inclusion is both a logical outcome of school restructuring (Brady, Hunter, & Campbell, 1997), and an issue that leads to the opportunity for reform (Forest & Pearpoint, 1992). Some believe that inclusion will only survive to the extent that it is associated with other reform efforts such as detracking, thematic instruction, cooperative learning, and alternative assessment (Sapon-Shevin, 1994/95).

Inclusion and Curriculum Reform. Any reform agenda must begin with the general education curriculum; appropriate curriculum is crucial for a successful inclusion program (Heron & Jorgensen, 1994/95; Powell & Hyde, 1997). Until recently, advocates of inclusion have focused on exceptional students' access to, rather than their subsequent experience with, the general curriculum. While educators may have modified the classroom environment and adapted instructional practices, in most cases they have not emphasized direct changes in the curriculum. Collaboration between general and special educators has brought about changes in *how* material is taught, but rarely have discussions focused on *what* is being taught (Pugach & Warger, 1996a). We know that the general education curriculum does not adequately meet the needs of less-advantaged students, minority students, and students with special needs. The curriculum's rigid, lock-step design ignores students' backgrounds and does not prepare them for higher level academic work (Cuban, 1989).

One reason for this failure to address curriculum and its impact on inclusion is that special educators often lack full knowledge of general education subject matter. Special educators are trained to address basic skills instruction, and they can adapt the existing curriculum, but they may not have sufficient knowledge about the purpose and content of the curriculum in regular classrooms (Pugach & Warger, 1996a). Pugach and Warger conclude that the success of inclusion rests on whether special educators can develop "curricular sophistication" regarding the general education curriculum (p.

17). In England and Wales, a constant tension exists between the National Curriculum and attempts to meet the needs of diverse learners (Dyson, 1997). In both the United States and Britain, many professionals believe that if general education were restructured to accommodate diverse learners, students with mild disabilities would have fewer problems and the number of students requiring special education services would decrease (Pugach & Warger, 1996a). Only about 15 percent of students with disabilities have learning problems so severe that they need to be taught using a different curriculum than that used for the general education population (Burnette, 1996). Therefore, in meeting the needs of the other 85 percent of the students with disabilities, special educators and regular educators must collaborate to design curriculum that focuses on a range of student abilities and provides differentiated instruction (Heron & Jorgenson, 1994/95; Pugach & Warger, 1996b). According to Ferguson (1995), educators "must begin with the majority perspective and build the tools and strategies for achieving inclusion from the center out rather than from the most exceptional students in" (p. 284). General educators must incorporate strategies to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population, many of whom are at risk for school failure. The general education curriculum must be more student-centered and more flexible, with less emphasis on age and grade level performance and on curriculum coverage (Roach, 1995).

Inclusion and Teaching/Learning Strategies. As we address the inclusion of special education students in regular classrooms, we must recognize that many traditional special education practices are not considered to be a good fit in general education classrooms (Pugach & Warger, 1996a). One cause of this mismatch is special educators' and general educators' differing views on how children learn and on the teacher's role. Many educators in regular classroom settings have moved toward a constructivist approach to teaching and learning, which suggests that learners actively construct their own meaning through interaction with the environment. Learning is viewed as a "meaning-making" process, with the teacher as guide or facilitator. Special educators are not typically schooled in constructivist teaching methods; rather, they are trained in behavioral approaches to teaching and learning. Many special educators believe that learning is the accumulation of basic skills that are transferred from the teacher to the students (Pugach & Warger, 1996a). According to Fuchs and Fuchs (1994/95), some special educators view constructivism as a poorly structured instruction alternative, and they believe that its activity orientation will further handicap special education students. Special education, in turn, has been criticized for too much "drills and skills" work with little emphasis on higher-order reasoning and critical thinking skills (Roach, 1995).

Connections between the teaching and learning strategies employed by regular and special educators need to be made at the preservice level, in teacher preparation programs. Most teacher education programs separate regular and special education majors. Even those preservice teachers who pursue dual certification simply participate in two programs with very different, often conflicting, teaching philosophies (Pugach & Warger, 1996b). If constructivist and behavioral approaches to teaching and learning are to be seen not as extremes on a continuum, but rather as approaches that can be integrated and used together in classrooms to meet all students' needs, then regular and special educators must collaborate—beginning at the preservice level. It must be realized that the special educator has no "special bag of tricks," and strategies that work well with students with disabilities often work just as well with nondisabled students (Barry, 1994/95, p. 6).

As the philosophy and practices of inclusion become linked to curriculum reform, and to teaching and learning strategies, it is critical to focus on those conditions that are most essential for successful inclusion. The controversies surrounding inclusion will fade only when the elements associated with effective inclusive programs are in place.

Essential Conditions for Successful Inclusion

A growing body of literature identifies what makes inclusion work. Researchers agree on such elements as administrative support, a range of special education supports, flexible and appropriate curricula, ongoing collaboration, common planning time, and shared program planning for regular and special educators (Gutloff, 1999; Jorgensen, 1994/95; Logan et al., 1994/95; Powell & Hyde, 1997). Information on the factors that support inclusive education and studies that show the consequences of failing to provide needed supports to students and teachers are widely available in the current scholarly literature. Further information on inclusive education can be found at the following World Wide Web sites:

- *NEA Status Report on the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*
  www.nea.org/publiced/idea (National Education Association, 1999)
- *IDEA Practices Web site (CEC)*
  www.ideapractices.org (Council for Exceptional Children, 1999)
- *Inclusive Education Web site*
  www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion (Renaissance Group, 1999)
- *Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices*
  www.asri.edu/cfsp/brochure/abtcons.htm (Consortium on Inclusive Schooling, 1999).

When blending special and regular education programs and providing appropriate supports in inclusive settings, the measure of success will be demonstrated in the actions of individual teachers and the resulting achievements of their students. Education change, Sarason (1990) concludes, "depends on what teachers do and think—it's as simple and as complex as that" (p. 193). As we expand the capacity of each teacher, classroom, school, and community to support students in inclusive settings, we must address individual educators' questions on how inclusion fits into their particular programs. The following guidelines are suggested plans of action as educators prepare to teach heterogeneous groups of students, including those students who have disabilities.

- Clarify your own belief system. What are your attitudes concerning the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classroom settings?
- Build collaborative relationships with the other educators who work with the student in question. Collaboration is a complex process, and collaborative relation-

ships are based on mutual trust, a common vision, and having regular time together to plan instruction.

- Tell your administrators what you need to make inclusion work, and ask for their support. Ask program administrators for the necessary time to plan and collaborate with other educators.
- Make use of the research and current literature in your teacher-to-teacher contacts. Avoid the "expert model"; instead, learn together as you plan instruction (Jones & Rapport, 1997).
- Strive to modify all learning activities so that they match a wider range of student needs and interests. Do not isolate the student with disabilities within your classroom. When you adapt activities for a wider range of student abilities and interests, many students will benefit.
- Expand your knowledge of adaptations and accommodations that are appropriate to your program and manageable for you. Adaptations can occur at any stage of instruction—in the environment, goals and objectives, methods, mode of response, materials, and evaluation. Such adaptations can be general, such as the use of manipulatives in math, or they can be specific, such as a student's use of a number facts card during addition exercises. Borrow ideas from your colleagues and from the literature on how you can adapt instruction to increase student success.
- Bring the issues of inclusion into other decisions at the building, program, and district levels. Consider the implications of decisions related to grouping strategies, textbook selection, equipment/materials purchases, scheduling, and staffing patterns.
- Do not mistake the "how" of individualized instruction (the specific accommodations and supports provided to the student) for the "what" of instruction (the targeted learning outcomes for that student). Do not assess student progress on what we as educators do, but rather on what the student knows and is able to demonstrate as a result of instruction.
- Consider outlining for students the key concepts in each unit of instruction. What general understandings do you want students to have as a result of their learning in that unit? The Coalition of Essential Schools calls these the "essential" or "overarching" questions that are central to a unit of study (Sizer, 1992). After you have identified these central questions, you can differentiate instruction so that: 1) all students are clear about and can achieve the most important outcome of the instruction, 2) the most skilled students are challenged, 3) adapted materials can be used for students with learning difficulties, 4) motivational strategies can be devised for students who are not motivated to participate, 5) students with the most severe disabilities can participate in some meaningful way, and 6) students can demonstrate their learning in different ways.
- Expand your classroom library by selecting quality children's literature dealing with disabilities. Such books can promote positive social interactions, reduce prejudice, and foster discussions about feelings and ethics (Hulen, Hoffbauer, & Prenn, 1998). Consult bibliographies of recently published books that are considered to be of excellent quality in order to choose appropriate literature (see Hulen, Hoffbauer, & Prenn, 1998).

Implications for the Future

The Integration of General and Special Education Services

The integration of regular and special education services should begin with state departments of education and teacher preparation programs. Colleges and universities need to end the practice of preparing teachers separately for special education and regular education; separate divisions or departments to oversee special and regular education should be eliminated (Pugach & Warger, 1996b). This integration should continue into each school and classroom. Teams of educators need ongoing curriculum development opportunities, staff development experiences, and daily common planning time in order to integrate support services for students (Logan et al., 1994/95).

Returning to the opening scenarios, consider how Tanya, Kenny, and Alycia, the students with disabilities, benefited from the collaboration between their classroom teachers and the special education teachers. Their integrated support led to strategies that allowed Tanya to be a member of her regular kindergarten class, enabled Kenny to move successfully from one learning activity to the next, and provided Alycia with sound amplification as she learns with her typical classmates.

The Integration of Teaching Philosophies and Strategies

Educators must focus on the individual needs of all students, not just those students who have identified disabilities. Regular and special educators can use behavioral and constructivist models of learning to design instruction that is developmentally appropriate for all students. Teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, and peer tutoring help every student to become more actively involved in the learning process, and they support all students' progress toward meaningful, challenging learning outcomes (Lovitt, 1996).

The Continuation of Curriculum Reform

Curriculum reform and school restructuring must continue if the needs of all students are to be met in the classroom. Within curriculum restructuring, educators can create a "different kind of regular education classroom" (Sapon-Shevin, 1994/95, p. 10), in which curriculum is flexible and curriculum can be delivered in innovative ways—thematic instruction, multiage heterogeneous grouping, and alternative assessment—are the norm. Practitioners must move away from teaching the curriculum and toward teaching the students (Maloney, 1994/95).

The Provision of an Array of Services

While the traditional continuum of special education placement options may no longer be necessary, a continuum or array of services is critical to successful inclusion. Phasing out separate special education settings does not mean denying students with disabilities specialized services such as occupational therapy or speech therapy (Sapon-Shevin in O'Neil, 1994/1995). Classroom teachers working with specialists can ensure that therapists' recommendations are followed in inclusive settings.

The Expansion of Whole School Reform Efforts

Schools need to examine how "whole-school" reform efforts fit with inclusive education. Such remedial programs as Direct Instruction (Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995), Success for All (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1994), or Reading Recovery (Clay, 1985) may strengthen and extend the school's continuum of services for students with disabilities, as well as having positive effects on typical students.

Conclusion

If the movement toward more inclusive education settings is to succeed, it must be based in the context of larger education reform efforts, such as the goal of transforming regular classrooms into more resourceful and humane systems (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994/95). A celebration of diversity recognizes that it already exists in every classroom—inclusion by itself does not create that diversity. Teacher expectations are every bit as important as teaching methods (Grebenstein, 1994/95). Marsha Forest (1985) writes of her hope that we will create an education system that serves all children, for "we create our tomorrows by what we dream today" (p. 40).

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CHAPTER 3—CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Managing the Classroom While Respecting the Child

Beatrice S. Fennimore and Molly C. Ihli

Mr. Biglan is a teacher in a large urban public school. "If these children came in knowing how to act," he complains to his colleague, "I could spend my time teaching more serious academic material."

Several children in the small village school where Ms. Matesi teaches have AIDS, and they seem to be frequently upset. "They are very disruptive," she shares with a visitor, "and have trouble paying attention. Perhaps they should be in a hospital rather than in school."

Mrs. Lang is preparing her students for the standardized achievement tests with hours of daily rehearsal on prepared worksheets. "This class is always restless and acting out," she tells a parent, "so in spite of my best efforts they may do poorly on their tests this year."

Defining Guidance, Management, and Discipline

The above statements embody much of the current controversy about guidance in schools. In this chapter, an elementary school classroom teacher and a college teacher will collaborate on a discussion of that controversy. Molly C. Ihli is a public school reading specialist with more than 25 years of classroom teaching experience. Beatrice S. ("Bz") Fennimore has taught a wide variety of education courses to undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students in a rural public university, as well as in an urban private university, and has done extensive supervision of student teachers in urban, rural, and suburban field experiences. Since each author would like to lend her distinct voice to this chapter, certain sections are clearly labeled according to who is speaking.[1]

Defining Terms

Guidance will be addressed as an approach to discipline that assumes each child's potential for good and that empowers productive human activity (Gartrell, 1994). As such, guidance is an intrinsic aspect of classroom management—it embodies the overall procedures that create an orderly and positive environment for teaching and learning (Bellon, Bellon, & Blank, 1992). The definition of guidance is also central to a conceptualization of discipline as an adult approach to fostering acceptable and productive behaviors in school (Charles, 1992). When students' behaviors are positively guided by adults, children have the opportunity to discover their potential and their ability to contribute to the present school community and their future society (Fennimore, 1995).

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[1] The authors have adopted this approach from the work of Celia Genishi in her book *Ways of Assessing Children and Curriculum* (1992).

(Molly's voice.) I know that many teachers think of guidance and discipline problems as areas to be addressed by guidance counselors out of the classroom. I agree to some extent, because counselors have been trained to work successfully with specific behavior problems. What is worrisome, however, is the tendency for the guidance office to become a dumping ground for students who are at risk for school failure or who often behave in difficult ways. Teachers need training and mentoring in guidance to help them develop appropriate classroom modifications when serious problems arise. They also need to record and report behavior very carefully. For example, a child who seems to lack focus may actually be exhibiting very positive attributes—he may be busy helping the children around him. Also, teachers' insights into children's personal lives (such as knowing that a child's parents have separated) might lead them to negative, and incorrect, assumptions about how events will affect children's behavior.

(Bz's voice.) Curriculum is part of guidance and management. Often, as an outside observer, I see problems with discipline and guidance that seem related to the curriculum itself. Children are asked to sit for long periods of time doing worksheets or writing answers to questions in workbooks. Teachers struggle to keep them on task, and student resistance grows as the day goes on. Depending on the school and the children, this resistance can range from quietly failing to complete the assignment, to reading a more interesting book behind a slightly opened desk top, to taunting a classmate into a physical fight. I believe that teachers need to define discipline and guidance as an intricate component of what they ask students to do, in terms of learning activities.

(Molly and Bz discuss developmentally appropriate practice.) We both believe that positive guidance, discipline, and management depend on developmentally appropriate practices that respect the age and individual characteristics of children, as well as their interests and current abilities (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). While recognizing current debates about whether one approach can be "appropriate" for everyone (Lubeck, 1995; Mallory & New, 1998), we believe that it is always appropriate to try to engage children in interesting, culturally relevant, and productive school activities. While we both have been witnesses to conversations in which teachers dismiss developmentally appropriate practice as "watering down" more important academic approaches, we see it more as a way to make the intellectual and social environment of the classroom more humane and more conducive to improved behaviors of teachers *and* students. In the spirit of that belief, we turn now to a discussion of the existing controversy over guidance and discipline in the classroom.

The Source of the Controversy

In an education environment characterized by public criticism and constant internal change, educators naturally struggle with inconsistencies in professional demands. On the one hand, they are expected to demonstrate control over their students at all times. On the other, they are expected to display creative approaches to meeting their students' diverse developmental needs. These sometimes oppositional expectations mirror the tensions between absolute discipline and the "open classroom."

(Molly's voice.) Open classroom, the extreme from the 1960s and early 1970s, is now part of the "junkyard for educational bandwagons." Many teachers who were initially excited and ultimately frustrated by open classrooms have either returned to absolute discipline or they dabble ambivalently with current ideas such as flexible grouping, readers' workshop, or cooperative learning.

(Bz's voice.) Ideas such as "open classroom" emerged from liberal university classrooms in the 1960s. Unfortunately, college professors who supported such ideas almost never spent significant time in real classrooms, where teachers struggled to design realistic implementation. The inevitable, and understandable, result was widespread suspicion among teachers that professors in the ivory tower lacked the knowledge or commitment to enter their worlds and help them turn idealistic concepts into daily realities. If in the classroom, many professors would struggle, just as many classroom teachers do, to develop successful strategies for positive guidance of student behavior.

We agree that children today are experiencing a high level of stress, and that many of them manifest their reactions to stress in the school setting. We believe that it is the responsibility of all educators to analyze institutional environments and expectations, and to find ways to support children and help them become resilient problem solvers in a challenging world. This will require honest, professional self-assessment, and a willingness to provide warm, humane, and moral guidance to the many children in need of adult direction.

Implications of the Controversy and Recommendations for Change

We believe that a middle ground between open classrooms and strict disciplinary approaches to school management can be found by not always tying positive guidance to student behavior. We have identified five implications of that belief that must be addressed:

- The behavior of children will improve when boring, meaningless, inappropriate school practices are altered or eliminated
- Classroom teachers and college teachers must conceptualize appropriate behavior as something that should be deliberately taught to children as an integral component of planning and teaching in the classroom
- Teacher resistance to the idea that children in critical developmental stages have the right to humane treatment regardless of personal behavior, cultural mannerisms, or challenging circumstances should be recognized and addressed as a professional problem
- College teachers and classroom teachers should recognize emotional and social development of children as an important component of the curriculum, rather than viewing academic subjects as more important than affective learning

- School administrators must realize that the importance of establishing student control, and of respecting the union rules concerning teacher requirements, should not lessen anyone's sensitivity to children's social and emotional needs.

(Molly discusses the first implication.) In responding to the first implication, I strongly believe that *the behavior of children will improve when classroom procedures are altered.* Misbehavior is often nothing more than resistance to inappropriate school practice. In spite of years of school reform, the daily lives of many children in schools revolve around constant teacher-led, whole-class instruction. I recommend mixing whole-group instruction with small-group and individual activities that allow children the opportunity to apply, practice, or reinforce skills in a more interesting social and cognitive context. Also, the teacher focus on homework, skills, and lesson objectives always should be flexible and *relevant to students' real needs and interests.* Almost every student's favorite teachers (indeed, many teachers' favorite former teachers) are those who provided opportunities for creativity, self-monitoring, prediction, questioning, and individually paced clarification of important ideas. These teachers were not punitive or rigid about smaller or inconsequential details that arose in the daily context of teaching and learning.

(Bz responds.) I believe that teacher educators must do a better job of preparing future teachers to follow Molly's recommendations. The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (1996) found that college professors often urge students to create innovative classrooms, even while they model the whole-group lecture method in their own classrooms. To be credible experts, professors must model excellent practice. Classroom teachers who experienced whole-group instruction as children *and* as college students have not had the opportunity to observe creative, interesting, engaging cognitive strategies being put to use. Teacher educators must do their part to promote interesting curriculum as a critical component of effective classroom management and guidance.

(Molly discusses the second implication.) I believe that the second implication, that *teachers have not been prepared to think of behavior as something that is deliberately taught throughout the day*, is very important. Guidance of behavior must be *planned*, and informed by sensitive observation and assessment of student needs (Mitchell, 1986). Children today are often frightened or worried about the challenges in their lives, and the adults with whom they live may be equally stressed. While teachers cannot function as their students' parents, they can actively guide the development of in-school appropriate behaviors as a positive part of daily learning. I recommend that teachers focus on three experiences that constantly occur in classrooms: conditioning, modeling, and positive reinforcement (Mitchell, 1986). I define conditioning as the ongoing collaboration by which students and teachers define appropriate behavior, modeling as the ongoing use of positive reinforcement, and positive reinforcement as the ongoing process that enables students and teachers to reinforce each other. By planning their modes of guidance, teachers are more likely to act in ways that model courtesy, compassion, and responsiveness to others' interests and needs.

(Bz responds.) I agree with Molly's recommendations, and I also recommend that educators on all levels begin to construct more relevant conceptualizations of conditioning, modeling, and reinforcement. Most educators today have been predisposed by

their life experiences and professional preparation to implement behaviorist approaches to teaching and learning. The widespread use of assertive discipline (Canter & Canter, 1992) has helped to institutionalize the belief that a well-organized system of behavioral consequences helps teachers to exercise their power of authority (Fennimore, 1995). Thus, punishments and rewards abound in classrooms, although there is little evidence that either artificial punishments *or* rewards benefit children (Kohn, 1996). The focus should shift, I think, to the concept of *teacher modeling for community building in classrooms.* Teachers can assess discipline problems, reflect upon them, and then plan modeling and intervention strategies to create an environment conducive to helping children learn better behavior skills.

The goal is not to make children compliant, but rather to help them become better citizens by rewarding them with feelings of competence and acceptance. Teachers can reinforce appropriate behavior through modeling and through construction of a positive social environment. More serious emotional or behavioral problems require a well-planned and analytical approach. There is no reason, however, to approach whole schools or classrooms as though all of the children need blanket forms of coercion to make them behave well. Teachers facing more severe behavioral challenges should have appropriate access to resources, such as support from behavior or intervention specialists.

(Molly discusses the third implication.) The third implication, that teachers *must be helped to overcome resistance to the idea of humane treatment of children regardless of their problems,* concerns me a great deal. In my experience, many classroom teachers find it difficult to embrace the concept that children are in critical developmental stages and have the *right* to humane treatment, regardless of their personal behavior, cultural mannerisms, or challenging circumstances. Teachers can embarrass and intimidate students in ways that would never be accepted in the adult business world (DeBruyn, 1990a). One could certainly argue that children are far more likely to be permanently harmed by insensitive and uncaring behavior than adults are. Vulnerable children can be deeply hurt, and become defiant, distrustful, or increasingly withdrawn in response to insensitive, rejecting teachers. Their misbehavior thus escalates as the rejection and disapproval of their teachers intensifies, and their chances for receiving an education collapse under the weight of their difficult circumstances.

I recommend that teachers take the time to place themselves in the positions of children who are marginalized by issues of bias, poor hygiene, racism, family disruption, imprisonment of a parent, and other social dilemmas. We all need to take the time to imagine how such suffering affects children's behavior. Today's teachers *must* have the ability to embrace the responsibility for being a caring, gentle adult, even when children act in difficult ways. Children have a right to humane treatment; schools that do not embody teacher commitment to social justice are unable to provide equitable and excellent education (Fennimore, 1989).

(Bz responds.) Molly's comments strike at the heart of what teaching must be today. School is the last and only resort for all too many children; it is unthinkable that teachers could strike the final, fatal blow against any child facing a life filled with difficulty. I have focused on the concept of teachers as advocates for children for my entire career (Fennimore, 1989) because I truly believe that advocacy is the antidote to burn-out.

Teachers do not want to be cruel and rejecting to that child whose mother has died, whose father is in prison, whose sibling was stabbed in a gang fight, or whose poverty is exhausting. Unfortunately, that child all too often responds to private pain with public misbehavior. The teacher who is unprepared, and unknowing of innate bias, can begin to lose a sense of forgiveness and compassion. Alternatively, a teacher who is an advocate can always say, "I am here for you. I cannot accept your actions at this time, but I understand how you feel. Let's work together to help you create new behaviors that will pave your way with more hope for the future."

(Molly discusses the fourth implication.) Turning to the fourth implication, *that teachers must be encouraged to view social and emotional development as equal counterparts to academic learning,* I think we need to examine the pressure placed on teachers to stress academics as preparation for standardized tests. I remember the day when I pressured a young student to complete a task. Jeremiah burst into tears saying, "Stop! I can't take it! You ask too much of me!" I now realize that it is futile for classroom teachers to pressure children who are fearful, discouraged, and insecure. Children must feel that they are competent if they are to develop the self-esteem so central to school performance (DeBruyn, 1990b). I recommend that teachers supplement their plans for teaching academic subjects with careful reflection on how children feel and how they might be provided with respect, encouragement, and relaxation at times during the school day. If children are not laughing, smiling, talking, and thinking in a relaxed and pensive way, the day is just too difficult for them!

(Bz responds.) When I teach graduate and doctoral courses to experienced classroom teachers, I work hard to emphasize the social, emotional, and physical elements of education, as well as intellectual skills and growth. The vast majority of my students, who are wonderful, have been heavily influenced by their early experiences and professional preparation to believe that *real* education focuses only on academic learning. This belief, combined with the tendency to believe that IQ or standardized achievement scores tell the whole story about ability, can really interfere with teachers' ability to follow Molly's important recommendations. I think it is important for all of us in education to embrace completely the meaning of newer theories of intelligence. Social and emotional skills are just as important, or more important, than academic skills in shaping children's behavior. Developing these skills requires teachers' constant and informed attention.

(Molly discusses the fifth implication.) The fifth implication is that *administrators should be encouraged not to overlook social and emotional development because of pressures created by federal, state, school board, and union requirements to focus on teacher needs, academic skills, or student control.* As long as adult concerns supersede child concerns, and management is emphasized over humane child guidance, children will suffer. As a teacher, I believe that every child is a worthwhile individual who has something to offer. I will never forget the new coordinator who told us to "forget the gobbledy-goop" and get down to business! Likewise, an administrator may know that a parent desperately needs to talk with a teacher about a child's behavior, but will not urge the teacher to take the time to meet with the parent after school because of union issues. An administrator may congratulate the teacher who barks commands at 1st-graders silently marching to the bathroom, but question the judgment of a teacher

whose students are a little noisy as they gleefully explore their self-made nature center. If administrators have somehow become distracted from the more human and personal aspects of teaching, it is my hope that caring, giving teachers will kindly, but firmly, point their attention back to the interests of the vulnerable child.

(Bz responds.) Every educator, and I include administrators as educators, should sit back at least once a year for a quiet hour in which to ponder the following question: "Why did I choose to enter the career of education?" With luck, all those early desires to make a difference in the lives of children will flood back. It is not easy to be a child today, nor is it easy to be an educator. Ultimately, however, it is our enthusiasm—our passion for our work—that inspires and guides the behavior of children in schools.

Conclusion

We both know that resistance to compassionate and caring ways of management and discipline can result in frustration, insecurity, and feelings of helplessness. Yet, all educators must roll up their sleeves and clean house with a better vision of what it means to guide children's behavior. Look back at the three scenarios with which this chapter opened. We would like Mr. Biglan to understand that it is part of his job to teach children *how* to act, and to realize that social and emotional skills are part of academic achievement. Likewise, we would share with Ms. Matesi that her children with AIDS are frightened, and that they need her warm guidance, compassion, and willingness to be flexible about academic expectations. Mrs. Lang needs to attend to her students' feelings of competence and their frustration with feeling pressure to do well on standardized assessment tests.

All educators (classroom teachers, college teachers, administrators, researchers, and specialists) need to unite in their determination to reach out to today's child—a child whose life is very different from the one we most likely lived. Behavior, ultimately, is a response to the love, acceptance, and humanity of those who surround us. Let us surround children with the best of human emotion and expectation!

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CHAPTER 4—ASSESSMENT

Allowing Traditional and Alternative Approaches To Co-Exist

Linda Doutt Culbertson and Gerardo A. Contreras

Mr. Bainey, a 1st-grade teacher, looks around his classroom, noting the varying reactions of his students to the standardized achievement test set before them. Bobbielyn, half out of her chair, is twirling her hair in frustration. Seth obviously has given up; he is rushing through the test booklet, filling in circles without looking at the questions. Sharazad, who usually does quite well with new challenges, moans audibly. Michael has his hand up again to ask for help—only to be told that his teacher is not "allowed" to help him with the test. Mr. Bainey sighs and wishes he could just "teach" and allow the students to "learn," instead of spending the week on testing.

In a 3rd-grade classroom down the hall, Jonathan struggles with a question on his own standardized test that states, "Which picture shows something that is a 'need' and not a 'want' . . . the airplane, the banana, or the car?" Jonathan fills in the answer circle beside the car, realizing that his family needs a car so they can go places, like his classmates' families do. Noting his incorrect response, his teacher reflects that Jonathan does know the difference between needs and wants and would get the correct answer were the question phrased differently, and if he had the same background and experiences as the other children.

A few miles away in another school district, members of an interdisciplinary team struggle to make sense of a pile of student portfolios. Trying to decide which students will qualify for the school's gifted and talented program is difficult when the assessment tool is different for each child. How can team members use such diverse collections of information to make valid decisions about student performance and placement?

Educators often express concern regarding scenarios like these when discussions of assessment strategies take place. Proponents of standardized tests argue that the best education programs require meaningful evaluation in which all students are given the opportunity to show what they have learned, based upon high standards and national norms (Gandal, 1995). Opponents argue that because we live in a global society where technology has expanded the amount of information available, we can no longer base education on a model of learning wherein knowledge is "poured" into children, memorized for tests, and forgotten shortly thereafter (Jervis & McDonald, 1996).

Efforts to reform education have led to intense discussions on assessment from those most concerned with advancing student achievement (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Although experts in the field of assessment may disagree on many points, there is general agreement that children need to acquire critical thinking skills (Hamayan, 1995). As information becomes more easily accessible and increasingly vast, students must be prepared to store and retrieve data, and to synthesize, analyze, and evaluate information in terms of its usefulness in their lives.

This chapter defines, and differentiates between, traditional and alternative assessment; addresses the issue from multiple perspectives, in an attempt to uncover underlying reasons for the ongoing debate; and suggests strategies for merging the two in order to implement an assessment program that meets the needs of all students.

Traditional Versus Alternative Assessment

Assessment is the process of discovering children's knowledge, abilities, and interests (Huffman, 1996). It is a continuing and cumulative process that not only evaluates performance on meaningful tasks over a period of time, but also examines children's attitudes, processes, efforts, and products (Isenberg & Jalongo, 1997).

Traditional assessment refers to the practice of using a single test administered to large numbers of students. Often appearing in a multiple-choice, true/false, or short answer format, traditional assessment offers numerous advantages. These tests are quick to administer, easy to score, and offer a basis of comparison with other students (Popham, 1993; Worthen, 1993). Traditional assessment may be individually constructed by classroom teachers or may be found in the more formal device of published tests that require standardized methods of administration, scoring, and interpretation (Lipson & Wixson, 1997). In many countries, traditional assessment is mandated and the results are used to meet schools' requirement for documentation of adequate student performance (Livingston, Castle, & Nations, 1989; Worthen, 1993). Nevertheless, much more effort is devoted to teacher-constructed exams than to assessments required by districts and states (Linn, 1996).

Alternative assessment refers to evaluation procedures that are based upon children's performance over time on actual tasks or experiences, rather than on standardized or teacher-made tests (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995; Wiggins, 1993). Measures such as demonstrations, projects, performances, portfolios, and open-ended problems are referred to as alternative assessment because they involve the completion of tasks that are found in "real life" situations (Feuer & Fulton, 1993; Guskey, 1994; Wortham, 1995). This method of student evaluation, often described as "performance-based assessment," "direct assessment," and "authentic assessment" (Worthen, 1993, p. 445), receives support because it involves the "direct assessment of complex performances" (Madaus & Kellaghan, 1993, p. 459). Proponents of alternative assessment argue that it: 1) integrates classroom instruction and evaluation procedures (Shepard et al., 1996), 2) provides evaluation techniques that are relevant to students (Travis, 1996), 3) encourages students to take responsibility for their own work (Maeroff, 1991), and 4) results in an ongoing, holistic picture of student performance (Shepard et al., 1996).

The Source of the Controversy

Differing perspectives in the area of student assessment are numerous and intense. Current education journals are filled with research, vignettes, and editorials pitting those who support the use of traditional assessment against those who declare that this form of "testing" is not really a form of assessment at all. Conflicting opinions from experts in the field have left many confused about whether to pursue alternative assessment, or to sit still in the hopes that it, like so many other reforms, will pass by the wayside (Birrel & Kee, 1996). An examination of the student assessment controversy that has been played out in the pages of professional journals enables readers almost to feel the turmoil many educators experience when pressured to mold their instruction so that it represents only one side of the assessment debate (Perrone, 1991).

Traditional Assessment

Proponents of traditional assessment point out the benefits of utilizing standardized testing procedures to identify individual students' strengths and weaknesses (Stiggins, 1997). Lipson and Wixon (1997) note that traditional assessment often is used as a valuable tool to demonstrate a program's effectiveness with individual students, to compile information on students' readiness, to complete in-depth psychological reports, and to help identify students with special needs. Even those who do not use traditional assessment in their daily instruction often rely upon the information gained from standardized measures to make decisions about placement, special programming, and the need for collaboration with other professionals.

Along with individualized assessment information, schools often use large-scale assessment measures that cross the boundaries of schools, districts, states, and nations. Large group assessment is a process in which specific strengths and weaknesses of a group (such as a class, school, or district) are measured in order to plan for future programming (Stiggins, 1997). Using traditional assessment enables this process to be systematic and objective, to be based on explicit criteria, and to include precise rating procedures (Stiggins, 1997).

Those who realize the benefits of traditional assessment, both individualized and group administered, state a variety of reasons for their convictions:

Standardization. Ms. Roberts, a 1st-grade teacher, has an assessment dilemma. One student, Mohammed, is very gifted at math, but is behind the other 1st-graders in his reading achievement. Judging from his cumulative folder, it appears that continued exposure to quality literature and intense instruction will help Mohammed gain the skills he needs to become a proficient reader. Certain that Mohammed's family will inquire about his progress at parent-teacher conferences, Ms. Roberts asks herself, "Is it fair for me to simply state that based upon his portfolio, Mohammed has come a long way since the beginning of the year?" Ms. Roberts knows that the parents will be asking about his progress compared to other 1st-graders, and so she wonders, "Wouldn't I want to know if my child were struggling with material that others in the classroom are mastering? How can I compare Mohammed to the others in the class? Should I share information I have gathered from my own assessments as well as the standardized assessments required by the district?" These questions are at the root of a serious dilemma for the classroom teacher who does not want to discourage the family, yet desires to let them know about a challenge that needs to be addressed through the collaborative efforts of all involved with the child. Although multiple assessment procedures have been completed, Ms. Roberts finds that without standardization, she has no way of placing the findings in context.

Maeroff (1991) notes that while placing less emphasis on comparisons among children may be admirable, at some point the family has a right to know where a child stands in relation to his or her peers. Since governing boards, legislators, and the public demand comparisons, inviting such diversity in assessment may undermine the results of education efforts (Worthen, 1993). Those wishing for commonality in student evaluation must face the difficult question of what constitutes high-quality work. Traditional assessment can help by providing standardized criteria for all students.

Time and Manageability. Mr. Ramírez is a novice teacher with three years of experience. His district has just implemented a new alternative assessment program in his inner-city school. Mr. Ramírez is familiar with the research stating the benefits of this type of program, and is more than willing to implement a reform that will help his students achieve more. He enthusiastically begins his assessment program, explaining the portfolio process to his students, purchasing binders for storing their top-quality work, and even defending the new venture to parents and colleagues.

After the first month of school, however, Mr. Ramírez begins to realize that things are not going as well with the portfolio assessment as expected. Some of the students have taken home their best pieces of work to be signed by their parents and then left them at home. Others are waiting for teacher conferences before making a decision about which pieces to place in their portfolios. Some students are wasting instructional time socializing, while their teacher tries to find time to have individual conferences. Mr. Ramírez feels overwhelmed; he is only one teacher, and the process of assessment is taking so much time and organization that he feels that he has little, if any, time left for good instruction.

Mr. Ramírez is not alone in his concerns. In a study of elementary teachers, Rueda and Garcia (1996) found that all those studied had experienced overwhelming and sometimes conflicting demands. Many described getting through the day as a "balancing act" in which they tried to accommodate competing demands for their attention and time. Teachers described feeling locked into practices that often hampered their efforts to experiment with new techniques. Additionally, teachers felt very limited in terms of time and resources, and stated that clerical work took away from time to investigate what individual children were thinking and how to help them.

Alternative assessment is labor-intensive and requires time to conduct observations, record data, and interpret information for individual students. These processes require the extensive involvement of the teacher, not only in additional paperwork responsibilities, but also in fitting assessment measurements into existing schedules (Wortham, 1995). Teachers who are responsible for the design as well as administration of assessment have found it not an easy task, but rather a slow process to determine the best ways of eliciting the most useful information (Maeroff, 1991).

Because traditional assessment is less complex in terms of scoring and administration, the factors of time and manageability create fewer concerns for teachers trying to find ways for successful implementation. Traditional assessment offers teachers the options of utilizing tests prepared by textbook publishers or constructing their own multiple-choice measurement in order to assess the entire class at one time.

As teachers attempt to reflect upon information gained from studying a child's performance activities, the question becomes, "What areas can I leave behind to gain the time needed to develop and implement a solid assessment program?" Because today's teachers must manage so much more than academics, traditional assessment offers a more manageable form of evaluation.

Cost. Although traditional assessment, in the form of standardized tests, assumes a large portion of education budgets, its machine-scored, multiple-choice answer sheets are relatively inexpensive, efficient, and quick (Worthen, 1993). The labor-intensive nature of alternative assessment, which requires scoring responses on writing samples, portfolios, and special projects, as well as observing performance over a longer period of time, calls for a significant investment in time and money (Popham, 1993). In England, the financial and personnel costs of implementing an alternative assessment program were found to be so immense that they threatened its viability as an evaluation method (Nuttall, 1992). While high-speed, electronic scanning machines can score thousands of multiple-choice response sheets economically and in mere seconds, scoring individual students' constructed responses takes more time, requires well-trained individuals, and demands considerable amounts of money (Popham, 1993). Unfortunately, most school systems do not have the luxury of extravagant testing budgets, and when budget cuts are made, traditional assessment becomes economically attractive.

Alternative Assessment

While teacher-constructed exams and standardized achievement tests can be efficient ways to measure students' accumulation of declarative knowledge and students' success in applying established procedures to solve specific problems, these traditional assessments are quite ineffective for comparing levels of knowledge or predicting future performance in a given subject area (Linn, 1996). Higher-order thinking skills, such as creative thinking, planning, problem-solving, and metacognition, are not readily measured by traditional devices because they do not provide information about an individual's thinking processes, nor do such devices facilitate the diagnosis of misconceptions or particular areas of difficulty (Linn, 1996).

Most contemporary educators are no longer satisfied assessing a passive accumulation of skills; they are seeking instead to find more holistic, interrelated, and integrative approaches to education evaluation (Hamayan, 1995). Those who support the use of alternative assessment state a variety of reasons for their convictions:

Holistic Picture of Student Performance. The following hypothetical experience is familiar to most teachers. As you pass out an exam, you can see the anxiousness in

Maria's eyes. As the exam is administered, you cannot help but notice the way she fidgets in her chair and chews her pencil; she even states, "But I studied something different!" When you grade the exam, you realize that your perceptions were accurate; Maria has done very poorly on the exam. She had been doing quite well on a daily basis, however. The test is not a true reflection of what she can do. You know Maria is going to be crushed when the exam is returned, and you cannot help but question an assessment practice that is merely a device used to record a grade, and that cannot show areas of improvement.

The practice of testing specific material at one point in time often serves to demoralize low-scoring children, especially when grades are presented without explanation and students' errors are not used as a basis for improvement (Wiggins, 1993). When grouping by ability is based upon a single test score, high-scoring children often are placed in the "academic" group, where instruction is at a faster and more intense pace, and low-scoring children are left behind with drill-and-practice exercises in an effort to compensate for their "deficiencies" (Goodwin, 1997).

In contrast to this practice, alternative assessment provides a holistic picture of student achievement and can be used on an ongoing, rather than a "one-shot," basis (Mandel-Glazer, 1993). Because information in a global society is readily available and plentiful, education must be based on a model where information is analyzed and problems solved, rather than on a model of memorizing responses, taking tests, and subsequently forgetting information. Evaluation must be completed so that both the teacher and the student learn from the process. As assessment is based on the quality of student work over time, and provides a clearer and fairer picture of student achievement than does traditional assessment (Culbertson & Jalongo, 1999), the questions "Where do I need help?" and "What can I do to improve?" should be easier to answer.

Measurement-Driven Instruction. Perhaps you work within a system that mandates the administration of standardized tests. In the words of Livingston, Castle, and Nations (1989), you feel as if you are "teaching with schizophrenia." You have become frustrated trying to meet the public's demands for high test scores, as they are published for all to see. You fear for your reputation and your job, but most of all you fear that your students will fail. In an attempt to improve school assessment practices from within the organization, you find yourself covering material for the test. When the test is over, you feel like "good teaching" can begin and that the students learn more in this time period than they did in the period of teaching to the test.

Test results used for placement, promotion, and comparison often guide all aspects of teaching and instruction. "The notion is often expressed that tests, or more broadly conceived assessment systems, signal what is held to be important to teachers, parents, and students" (Linn, 1996, p. 180). As a result, textbooks are geared to test objectives, and teachers teach to those objectives, even when they are not appropriate (Livingston, Castle, & Nations, 1989). The top priority in many schools is getting students to perform well on the test. As scores are published, school administrators and the public demand that test scores improve, thus causing the test to become the foundation of the curriculum (Livingston, Castle, & Nations, 1989).

In contrast, mastery involves thoughtful understanding and being able to do that which is effective or novel with a complex situation (Clinchy, 1995). Alternative assessment involves choosing benchmarks that not only are important to those outside the field of education, but also will cultivate students' passionate interest. The goal is for students to become lifelong learners. Unless a person enjoys the pursuit of knowledge, learning will remain merely a tool to be set aside as soon as it is no longer needed (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1997). Alternative assessment provides for the teaching of thinking to be recognized as important. For this to occur, "it is necessary to develop assessment procedures that do justice to the goals" (Linn, 1996, p. 180).

Relevance. The subject of relevance to life experiences is a hotly debated issue in assessment circles. Jonathan, the 3rd-grader at the beginning of this chapter, knew that when talking about the things one needs to survive, a banana definitely would be classified as a need over an airplane or a car. But from his perspective, the car seemed like a much more pressing need since his family had food, but did not have a car. The problem was irrelevant to Jonathan because it did not relate to his present circumstances (Karther & Lowden, 1997).

In order for assessment to be authentic, it must be meaningful. Students should know the purpose of assessment, the criteria to be measured, and the assessment techniques to be used before a testing experience takes place (Travis, 1996). "A key contributor to a school's success is the ability of its teachers to provide de-mystified, useful and justifiable feedback to students and external authorities about academic performance" (Wiggins, 1988, p. 20). In this way, testing can become relevant and meaningful to learners and can be woven into their schema of learning. Alternative assessment mirrors the process of life, in which feedback often is given before the end of a performance, regardless of the task (Culbertson & Jalongo, 1999).

Traditional tests often are criticized for emphasizing isolated facts, rote memorization, and unrelated conceptual frameworks. Moreover, traditional assessment tasks typically present what Linn (1996) calls "well-structured problems." These problems are stated clearly, and all the information needed to solve them is either presented to or already known by the learner. In other words, an algorithm exists that will guarantee a correct solution if properly applied. Linn notes that most important problems, both in and out of school, are "ill-structured." They do not have a single correct answer, do not provide all the information needed to solve them, and are not solvable by applying previously learned information. Ill-structured problems, such as those posed during alternative assessment, contain ambiguities that make them more relevant and more likely to promote continuous learning (Linn, 1996).

The Dilemma

Many educators clearly face an assessment dilemma. On the one hand, traditional assessment provides the standardization, manageability, and cost benefits teachers need to survive in current education conditions. On the other hand, alternative assessment provides a more holistic picture of a child's learning, and is more relevant to the problems faced in today's global society. What is the practitioner to do? Is it possible to merge the two types of assessment to find a "happy medium"? Can traditional and alternative approaches to assessment truly co-exist?

Implications and Suggestions

The following are suggestions and recommendations to help guide educators facing the assessment dilemma.

Professional Development for Educators

Become Reflective Practitioners. Teachers must begin to assume the role of professionals, capable of offering and making informed decisions in relation to the development and practice of assessment programs in their schools. Assessment encompasses the idea of the teacher as someone who gathers data and analyzes evidence of students' learning (Strickland & Strickland, 1998). This role calls for teachers to become reflective practitioners or explorers of their own classrooms (Schön, 1983). As teachers begin to write and share their own stories on teaching and assessment dilemmas, a valid form for inquiry emerges. "Just as personal narratives help us to learn about ourselves and our students, they can also be used to analyze and frame, to formulate and sometimes solve problems" (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995, p. 103).

Remember, Clear-Cut Answers Do Not Exist. Teachers must become aware that well-defined answers to the assessment controversy do not exist and that testing will continue to be a part of schooling. This means that we must use various forms of assessment to accommodate differing student needs and learning styles. Strickland and Strickland (1998) remind us that

> the only thing we can do is to try to keep standardized tests in perspective. We must not let them control our curriculum nor our teaching, and must be advocates for our students as they continue to be subjected to these tests and the consequences of test scores. (p. 210)

Just as sole reliance upon standardized tests will not acknowledge the diverse needs and backgrounds of students (Stiggins, 1997), sole reliance on alternative assessment will not meet the need for comparisons demanded by the public (Maeroff, 1991).

Teachers must keep in mind that standardized tests and alternative forms of assessment are not necessarily conflicting ways to assess students. By viewing them as complementary means of collecting and analyzing information, more holistic evaluations of student achievement can be achieved (Birrel & Kee, 1996). Students thus can benefit from a mix of evaluation procedures, which encompasses both traditional and alternative forms.

Partnerships Between Colleges of Education and Local Schools

The role of universities and schools must be redefined. Few classroom teachers, especially novice teachers, are prepared for handling the flood of academic, political, and research issues that inescapably accompany student assessment. Therefore, teachers tend to teach to the test despite their lack of faith in tests as a way to measure students' learning progress (Brown, 1989). Furthermore, limitations and/or restrictions in theoretical and practical knowledge about traditional testing and alternative forms of assessment often cause educators to face difficult, uncomfortable situations with parents, students, school administrators, and even other colleagues.

For example, teachers who have introduced portfolios or performance assessments often describe their struggles to deal with parents' questions. Those parents who were taught using traditional methods are often skeptical about evaluations that do not involve multiple choice tests or comparisons among students (Culbertson & Jalongo, 1999).

A new partnership needs to be established in the education arena whose purpose is to identify and address both general and specific needs of preservice, novice, and seasoned teachers in assessment issues. As Sandholtz and Finan (1998) point out, "blurring the boundaries" between local schools and universities to promote partnerships seems more urgent today. In fact, the future looks rather uncertain as many experts in the education field suggest that, because of the political and social issues at stake, the testing debate will continue to not only exist, but even flourish in the years to come.

The new partnership would involve the participation of prospective teachers, educators, school administrators, and teacher educators who, we believe, have a major responsibility in the preparation of well-informed reflective professionals. In other words, colleges of education should prepare prospective teachers with both "minds-on" and "hands-on" approaches to issues being debated in education.

Schools of education must strive for two major responsibilities: 1) revisiting their programs to ensure that curricular goals in the preparation of prospective teachers reflect state-of-the-art practices in classroom assessment and practical knowledge on assessment controversies, and 2) bridging channels of communication with schools in order to offer opportunities for professional development and for the exchange of personal narratives, ideas, and research that will enrich all parties involved in school-university partnerships.

Parental and Family Involvement

"Children live their lives in two worlds: that of the community and that of the school. When these two worlds fail to know, to respect, or to celebrate each other, children are placed in a difficult position" (McCaleb, 1994, p. vii). The idea of parental involvement has been part of schools' agenda for decades, yet it often has been limited to "traditional school-home communication patterns" (Karther & Lowden, 1997) in the form of open houses, school newsletters, school plays, and parent/teacher meetings. Diversity, be it social or cultural, calls for an urgent reexamination of this traditional view (Karther & Lowden, 1997).

Thus, the search for more appealing and successful ways to foment authentic parent participation, understanding, and support for assessment policies and practices is also at the heart of successful learning and assessment activities in schools. As Karther and Lowden (1997) assert,

> Although there have been a repertoire of successful strategies to involve parents in the past, the diversity of today's families and societal changes have placed an additional burden on schools. Schools may be hard pressed to find methods that work with some parents. (p. 41)

In short, schools must organize family involvement activities beyond inviting parents to school plays and open houses. Parent support groups, curriculum nights, workshops, and half-day visits each month have shown success in areas where traditional involvement measures have failed to create lasting relationships with families (Karther & Lowden, 1997; Routman, 1996). As a result, children and their families can learn together with the child's teacher. Promoting formal or informal gatherings not only serves to inform parents, but also involves them in curricular and assessment changes or decisions. Schools that implement changes in practice and policy without including parents or making clear to them what those changes imply, jeopardize parents' support and, ultimately, the child's achievement (Routman, 1996).

Community Awareness

The idea of community awareness has a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, schools (administrators and teachers) must reach out to inform the community about assessment issues. This can be done through varying means (such as writing letters to the editors of local newspapers or participating in local TV spots). On the other hand, community awareness also requires teachers to learn more about, and become closer to, their local communities. Reaching out to the community gives schools and teachers the opportunity to gain public support and to make informed decisions regarding learning and assessment issues in their classrooms. As Grinberg and Goldfarb (1998) argue, moving schools toward the community should go beyond the traditional notion of parental involvement, in order to embrace family and community involvement as well. The best way to gain the support of parents and community members is to actively involve them in the process of curricular and assessment changes (Kenney & Perry, 1994).

Partnerships Among Teachers, Administrators, and Legislators

Teachers must be allowed to bring their own insights and suggestions to matters related to curricular and assessment decisions. Top-down decisions in curricular and assessment matters can cause disapproval and frustration among teachers. Administrators, school districts, and policymakers need to listen to the many parties involved in children's education—teachers, parents, and local community members.

Those most affected by national and state standards and assessment policies, other than students and parents, are classroom teachers. Administrators, school districts, and policymakers must give teachers the chance to communicate and to share feelings, ideas, and research. They must have a genuine interest in what teachers have to say. Most important, administrators must support practitioners in their efforts to share their ideas with others in the school, and with attendees at local, state, and national conferences.

Conclusion

The quest for common ground in the assessment debate can be addressed through the professional development of teachers, through partnerships between local schools and institutions of higher learning, and through the collaborative efforts of all involved in the education process. The major challenge for all parties involved in making assessment decisions is to work collaboratively for new partnerships. Failure to both recognize and emphasize these basic considerations will continue to set traditional and alternative forms of assessment against each other, thus impeding the search for informed and fair ways to assess our students' learning.

Clinchy (1995) states, "To care about one's thinking and to think about what one cares about: these, I submit, are goals worth aiming for. These are things that all students should be able to do" (p. 392). Teachers must strive to ensure that, no matter their assessment method, they have gained insight into what students can do and about those areas in which students need help. Becoming involved with students' learning, and inspiring them to become responsible for their own learning, is a most rewarding endeavor. It requires not only knowledge and skill, but also commitment and caring.

Meaningful change will not come quickly or easily, but it never has. Change requires careful reflection upon past practice, a willingness to adapt what is not working in the present, and a balance of careful planning and hope for the future. Although the assessment debate will continue, a firm knowledge of both sides of the issue, a commitment to doing what is best for children and their communities, and a desire to make each assessment task a learning experience for ourselves as well as our students will be our best approach in a rapidly changing world.

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CHAPTER 5—MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Celebrating Diversity While Building Community

Jyotsna Pattnaik

A group of 5th-grade boys and girls are working on a project titled, "Women astronauts around the world." Their inquiry includes exploration of societal stigma against women's education, especially in the field of science, and child-rearing practices in different societies that limit children to gender-specific roles from a very young age. They also intend to read women astronauts' autobiographies and biographies that document their struggles and successes in a non-traditional profession.

A teacher in a mainstreamed kindergarten classroom notices the children's curiosity about Justin, a child with spina bifida. Justin uses a wheelchair and wears a brace that encircles his body. The teacher asks Justin and his parents if they would explain his physical disabilities to his peers and respond to their questions. With the support of the teacher, peers, and the school nurse, Justin is able to walk with crutches and participates in almost all classroom activities, including the school's talent show.

After a racial incident between blacks and whites in a rural Midwestern community, the 7th-graders in a local middle school take up a project to explore the attitudes and experiences of different ethnic groups in their own community. They conduct interviews and make observations in community places such as restaurants, supermarkets, hospitals, schools, housing complexes, and churches. The students' written reports (which are later published in the local newspaper) include the reasons for tension between blacks and whites in their community, as well as their recommendations to maintain racial harmony.

Definition of Multicultural Education

Many teachers view multicultural education as merely teaching about different ethnic groups. In theory, multicultural education also should address diversity in social class, gender, physical abilities, and religion—to name but a few categories. Today's inclusive classrooms (achieved after the introduction of mainstreaming, initiatives to abolish tracking practices, and the enrollment of a growing number of religious and linguistically minority children) make it imperative that we engage children in building a sense of community with their peers.

Rationale for Multicultural Education

Multicultural education began in the U.S. as a human rights movement to ensure justice, freedom, and equality, especially for those who had been marginalized legally, politically, academically, or socially. The proponents of multicultural education acknowledge, however, that, like two sides of a coin, freedom for minorities cannot be achieved without freeing the majority from their biases, ignorance, prejudices, and ethnocentrism. Therefore, Banks (1991) rightly defines multicultural education as the "education of freedom" for all.

Multicultural education is based on certain pragmatic premises. Racial, cultural, ethnic, and social diversity is a reality of American life. Moreover, this diversity is growing multifold. Projections for the year 2020 predict that 35.1 percent of the nation's school-age population will be students of color, and that this proportion will increase to 56.1 percent by the year 2050 (Jibaja-Rusth, Kingery, Holcomb, Buckner, & Pruit, 1994). The current Eurocentric curriculum will not meet the needs of this multicultural student population. From the practical perspective, providing children with cross-cultural knowledge and communication skills is essential given a global economy and a multicultural workforce.

Demographic projections also suggest that while the classrooms across the country will be heterogeneous, the majority of the teachers in U.S. classrooms will remain white, middle class, English-speaking, and Protestant. Banks (1991) projects that teachers of color will constitute only 5 percent of the nation's teaching force by the year 2000. Therefore, the success of multicultural education lies in preparing classroom and preservice teachers to have an open attitude and the requisite knowledge and skills in order to educate diverse learners and foster a sense of community in diverse classroom settings.

Debate Over Multicultural Education

While the imperative for multicultural education is widely recognized in education circles, considerable controversy and persistent protest surround the concept. The debate on multicultural education focuses on three fundamental questions:

- How should multicultural education be defined?
- How should attainable goals be framed?
- What constitutes appropriate content for multicultural education in a pluralistic society like the U.S.?

In recent years, there has been some opposition to including multicultural literature and world history in the public school curriculum (Ravitch, 1990). Schlesinger (1992) claims that multicultural education will disunite America. Stotsky (1991) views multicultural curriculum as a form of political indoctrination. D'Souza (1991) questions the intellectual rigor of multicultural curriculum and scholarship, and Steele (1994) concludes that multicultural education has become a political platform whereby each group can justify itself, its own worth, and its power through difference alone.

It is interesting to note that both the opponents and proponents of multicultural education strongly believe in the concept of "e pluribus unum" ("one out of many" or "unity in diversity"), or a common cultural core. Where they differ is with regard to the means for achieving it (Banks, 1993). For example, Hilliard (1991) states that in a multicultural society it makes all the difference "how we arrive at a common core" (p. 13). Should this core draw content from a purely Anglo-Saxon canon of knowledge, or should it reflect the wisdom and contributions of many cultures? Should unity be achieved by avoiding differences, or through creating a community that celebrates diverse viewpoints?

Misconceptions About Multicultural Education

Certain myths and misconceptions abound regarding multicultural education (Banks, 1993; Grant, 1994). These myths and misconceptions focus on a number of issues related to curriculum, schooling, and society.

Multicultural Education Is in Opposition to the Western Tradition. Critics perceive multicultural education as a threat to Western civilization's traditions and values. D'Souza (1991) argues that many of the classic books of Western civilization have been displaced as a result of multicultural education. Some critics argue that such curriculum revision movements will lower public schools' standards by introducing low-quality literature and revisionist history.

In reality, multicultural education is based on academic integrity, as well as political ideals. The inclusion of multicultural literature in the curriculum is intended to expose children to *quality* literature produced by non-Western cultures, so that children will realize that artistic genius is not limited to Western cultures. Non-Western history introduces children to the concept that many Western ideals have their roots in non-majority cultures, such as the democratic form of government practiced by the Iroquois Indians (Weatherford, 1988). Students can also learn that certain mathematical calculations were introduced to the world by non-Western cultures, such as the Egyptians.

Multicultural Education Is Only for Minorities. Some teachers and administrators, especially in rural areas, justify the exclusion of multicultural education on the grounds of student demography. In other words, they feel there is no need for multicultural education in schools where the majority of students are white or middle class. In contrast, proponents view multicultural education as empowering "all students to become knowledgeable, caring, and active citizens" (Banks, 1993, p. 23). In fact, they feel that the need for multicultural education is greater for those children who have less exposure to diversity in their immediate communities. Multicultural education can provide appropriate cultural education to white students who have been bombarded with stereotypes and biases by their families, communities, and the media.

Multicultural Education Has a Separatist Agenda. This particular claim is based on the perception that multiplicity, which has resulted from the assimilation of many different cultures over past centuries, is a threat to American unity. Proponents of multiculturalism counter that multicultural education intends to unify a nation that historically has been divided along lines of class, race, and gender. Pressures from mainstream culture to reject one's own culture do not lead to true unity. Therefore, the common American culture must acknowledge and accommodate the contributions of many different cultures.

Diversity Is a Liability to Society. When diversity is considered a liability rather than a reality that offers myriad possibilities, schools focus more on assimilating children into the mainstream curriculum. Minority children may be thought to lack abilities, motivation, and personality traits necessary to succeed in school, rather than being appreciated for possessing different forms of knowledge. Therefore, strategies to prepare children of diverse backgrounds to fit into the mainstream curriculum have become the school's primary focus. In recent years, experts in multicultural education have recommended culturally responsive pedagogy, in which curriculum and teaching strategies are built around minority children's home/cultural backgrounds and their individual needs and strengths (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Multicultural Education Emphasizes Only Differences. Many people view multicultural education as the study of differences. In reality, multicultural education simultaneously embraces the differences and commonalities of human experiences. Units on seasonal festivals, for example, can show the common purpose and meaning behind these festivals, while detailing the different ways people celebrate. One teaching tool that stands out is a multicultural resource book by Clegg, Miller, and Vanderhoff (1995) that provides lesson/unit activities designed for each month. The activities for December, for example, focus on people, places, events for the month, and winter holidays around the world. Children's literature books also can be used to review differences and commonalities. In particular, several books written by Anne Morris include concrete illustrations of multicultural celebrations that are appropriate for the early childhood grades:

Morris, A. (1997). *Holidays around the world.* New York: Dutton Children's Books.
Holidays are celebrated differently in different cultures.
Morris, A. (1994). *Loving.* Fairfield, NJ: Mulberry.
The love between parent and child is universal, although the words used are different.
Morris, A. (1992). *Houses and homes.* New York: Lothrop.
People around the world live in many different houses. Home is where love is.

A multicultural curriculum handbook produced by the High Museum of Art (1996) suggests studying art pieces from various cultures that represent the themes of universally experienced emotions, such as love, anguish, awe, triumph, and joy. The themes included in the handbook are interdisciplinary and designed for grades 3-12. They will engage children in critical thinking about the various aspects of art, as well as the cultural, social, and historical factors that influenced a particular artist. The activities also encourage children to connect these themes to their own lives, as well as to contemporary national and global events.

This particular strategy is based on the principle that it is easier to move children from the known to the unknown (Ramsey, 1992). Experts in the field of intercultural communication emphasize that learning about others needs to start with knowledge of oneself. Once the connection is made through the commonalities in human experiences, children will be able to accept differences more readily.

Multicultural Education Is the Teaching of Heroes, Food, and Festivals. In the past, multicultural education focused on customs, traditions, food, festivals, and heroes of different cultures; these topics were added to the curriculum without changing its structure. Teaching about Native Americans during Thanksgiving or African Americans in February are examples of this traditional approach, which has been criticized for perpetuating stereotypes and for lack of focus on a culture's contemporary experiences. Proponents of multicultural education argue for a critical and integrated approach to multiculturalism that focuses on real issues facing various minority groups. Banks (1994) suggests that children need to be engaged in discussions, and even some form of social action, about discriminatory practices in the society.

This author believes that teachers should infuse both intercultural learning (celebrations, values, traditions, beliefs, norms of a culture collected from authentic and primary sources) and issue-based learning (discriminatory practices in the society or national/global challenges) into their curriculum. If carefully implemented, this combined approach will allow children to respect diverse perspectives.

Multicultural Education Focuses on Content Only. Teachers sometimes view the major focus of multicultural education as integrating content about diverse groups into the curriculum (Banks, 1993). In reality, multicultural content serves as an instrument to engage children in a process that is multifold in purpose.

- First, multicultural education prepares children to practice the principles of democracy in discussing and respecting individual differences, providing equal opportunities to all the members of the community, and expressing one's viewpoints freely. It also helps children realize that in a democracy, "community does not have to exist on total agreement; indeed, it does exist with conflict and disagreement" (Keith, 1994, p. 11).
- Second, the process of multicultural education could very well be a self-discovery process (Phillips, 1993), helping all children to identify their interests, viewpoints, biases, and prejudices.
- Third, it bridges the "us versus them attitude" among children, through their mutual search for truth and equality for all.
- Fourth, the process of multicultural education is in keeping with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning. Children construct their own learning through interaction with others. Such learning moves to a higher level in a diverse classroom because of the cognitive tensions that result from accommodation of diverse perspectives into one's cognitive schema. The multicultural process provides more opportunities for children to engage in the process of critical thinking and diverse ways of solving problems.

Vandercook, Medwetz, Montie, Taylor, and Scaletta's (1997) curriculum ideas on perspective-taking are helpful for teachers who are interested in emphasizing the process of multicultural understanding. The authors have divided the curriculum into four units as shown in Table 1:

Table 1:
Curriculum Ideas on Perspective Taking

UNITS	LESSON IDEAS
Unit A: My Perspective	I have feelings I have a perspective What you know makes a difference Challenging the perspectives
Unit B: Other Perspectives	Many perspectives Step into someone else's shoes Listening is important What it means to be a family
Unit C: Understanding Conflict	Good, we see it differently Conflict is a part of life, and is reflected in books and movies Can we work it out? The different paths The wheel of work it out
Unit D: Working Together	Together we are better How you are makes a difference

What Is a Community?

A true community embraces diversity as integral to its sustenance and growth. For the purpose of this discussion, I will focus on the classroom community of teachers, teacher assistants, other adults, and children from diverse backgrounds. We must remember that the very presence of diverse groups of children will not bring the desired spirit of community unless learning experiences are designed with that purpose. Peck (1987) defines community as:

> a group of individuals who have learned to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to rejoice together, mourn together, and delight in each other, mak[ing] others' conditions our own. (p. 59)

Therefore, like any other community, the major goal of a diverse classroom community is participation, contribution, stability, and pride. The following section explores how to achieve these goals within the six characteristics of a true community, as identified by Peck (1987):

1. *Inclusiveness.* Inclusiveness brings richness to the community. To help children appreciate the essence of diversity, teachers can provide examples of inclusiveness as a natural phenomenon. Parents should be an integral part of the inclusive classroom community. Successful communication between teachers and parents, as well as among the parents, strengthens the spirit of community in a diverse classroom. However, researchers document that minority and immigrant parents sometimes find it difficult to communicate with the teacher and other parents. Schmidt (1998) reported that immigrant parents in her study who would come to class celebrations or special occasions frequently stood in one corner of the room without participating.
2. *Commitment.* In a true community, Sergiovanni (1994) writes, "We become connected for reasons of commitment rather than compliance" (p. 58). A true community intends to preserve the well-being of every member of the community even in the face of negative experiences, conflicts, and disagreement. Members share a common vision and commit to work toward that vision. For example, when children are researching a social issue (such as slavery and its historical and contemporary impact), a common goal develops as they search and argue over various perspectives. This collaborative achievement brings a sense of unity among the group members that would not be possible when working independently.
3. *Consensus.* In a true community, diverse experiences are not ignored, denied, or changed, but rather are "celebrated as gifts" (Peck, 1987, p. 62). While participants acknowledge individual preferences and viewpoints, they make deliberate and collaborative efforts to arrive at a consensus. The role of the teacher is to provide children the psychological and social space necessary to be engaged in this consensus-building process.
4. *Contemplation.* To sustain the spirit of community, Peck (1987) advises that group members need to constantly assess themselves; contemplate their own biases; reflect on issues, dilemmas, and conflicts; and honestly share their reflections with each other. Reflective journal writings, peer counseling, and techniques that encourage empathetic understanding are useful in this contemplation phase.
5. *Vulnerability.* In a true community, a certain level of vulnerability is important. Within a safe environment, members can make themselves vulnerable and honestly share their inner feelings and their disagreements. Such risk-taking behavior is encouraged, rather than stifled. Teachers may design a bulletin board titled "How I felt" when______," which will include children's feelings related to classroom events (e.g., when somebody did not share something or when name-calling occurred).
6. *Graceful Fighting.* In a diverse community, conflict is natural (Hocker & Wilmont, 1995). Members need to understand that gracefulness and respect can be maintained amidst arguments over issues and viewpoints. One need not avoid conflict to achieve harmony. Debates, forums, seminars, and panel discussions are appropriate for this purpose.

Dimensions of Multicultural Education and Community Building

Three of the dimensions of multicultural education identified by Banks (1993) have relevance for the discussion on community building: content integration, knowledge construction, and prejudice reduction.

Content Integration

Typically, social studies is considered to be the most appropriate curriculum area for inclusion of multicultural content. Experts suggest, however, that carefully designed multicultural content can be incorporated into other curriculum areas, including mathematics and science. For example, biographies of famous minority and women scientists and mathematicians can be studied. The non-Western origins of certain mathematical concepts, such as the ancient Egyptians' algorithm for multiplication and the Egyptian method of multiplication, should be emphasized. Harmon (1998) recommends selecting books from various literary genres, time periods, and diverse perspectives, and then organizing the books around various themes.

Some caveats need to be made, however. While using multicultural content in different subject areas, the content integration needs to be achieved in such a way that children do not view their own perspectives and ways of life as superior and others' perspectives as exotic or insignificant (Ramsey, 1992). Second, the process of making connections between self and others needs consistent monitoring.

Knowledge Construction

During the process of knowledge construction, "teachers help students to understand how knowledge is created and how it is influenced by factors of race, ethnicity, gender, and social class" (Banks, 1993, p. 25). Banks identified four different kinds of knowledge: personal/cultural, popular, academic rational, and transformative.

Personal/Cultural. Children use their diverse personal/cultural knowledge to understand concepts and interpret events and phenomena (Banks, 1993). The teacher needs to encourage all children to contribute their personal/cultural knowledge to the curriculum so that everyone can have access to a wider spectrum of concepts, experiences, and knowledge. Family oral history projects can be appropriate for every grade level. The understanding to be found through such projects enables children to connect to culturally diverse peers and their families/communities.

Popular Knowledge. Children learn many stereotypes and biases about other groups through television and movies, and through their families' and communities' actions. Banks (1993) identifies this process as "popular knowledge." A true understanding cannot be established among the members of a diverse classroom community unless children are encouraged to explore and reject these societal biases. Children may explore the differences in the recent animated film version of *Pocahontas* versus the true story, or they can examine media representations of minorities and women. Engagement in such meaningful research projects enables children to collaboratively construct their knowledge regarding the impact of societal biases on individuals and groups, and to empathize with the victims.

Academic Rational and Transformative Academic Knowledge. Academic rational knowledge, according to Banks (1993), represents a canon of academic knowledge that is based on mainstream perspectives alone. Banks suggests that this form of knowledge needs to be replaced by the "transformative academic knowledge," which revises the existing curriculum to include diverse perspectives. For example, a unit on "Columbus Discovers America" may engage children in researching history from the perspectives of both Native American and mainstream points of view. Multicultural literature based on the experiences of African Americans, Native Americans, and immigrants have been added to children's literature collections in recent years. The purpose here is to make the minority groups visible in the curriculum, while maintaining intellectual honesty and integrity. It is hoped that exposure to different groups in the curriculum and the process of engagement in seeking truth will have a long-term intellectual and social impact on children.

Prejudice Reduction

Research shows that children at a very young age become aware of differences in people around them. This awareness can later turn to stereotyped attitudes about others or discomfort when dealing with people who are different. Teachers need to adopt strategies to make children aware of their own biases and to create learning experiences that will allow children to have positive peer experiences. For example, themes of "Friendship" or "Something I Like About You" in early childhood classrooms will make children comfortable with who they are and help them accept those who are different.

Play and art are important aspects of a curriculum that fosters cultural awareness and understanding among children. For example, twins from a war-refugee immigrant family in one kindergarten classroom enacted a block play scenario that depicted their family's escape from their war-torn country as well as representing their wish for peace in their homeland. The teacher helped the children verbalize their story so that other children could listen and empathize with them. This particular play scenario also opened up the process of communication between the twins and their American peers. The twins, who earlier were perceived as "the others" by their American peers, gained instant recognition and inclusion.

Upper-grade students could interview an ethnically/racially different peer and reflect upon and share their own biases. This will allow children to perceive similarities and differences in their lives, and make a connection with the culturally different peer (Pattnaik, 1998; Schmidt, 1997). Prejudice reduction is the first step to community building among children. Unless addressed early in life, such personal biases and prejudices may later manifest as ethnocentrism and discriminatory behavior.

Conclusion

The value of multicultural education in preparing children for a better, just, and tolerant world is indisputable. The process of building community in a diverse classroom serves both individual and societal purposes. It prepares each individual to be a better human being with a hope that, collectively, children will create a better society in future. The challenge that confronts teachers is how to maintain the essence of diversity within a true spirit of community, while making the multicultural curriculum truly inclusive. If properly understood, a spirit of community is inherently embedded in multicultural education. In fact, multicultural education intends to prepare children to participate in a multicultural and democratic community by helping them understand the dynamics of human interdependence and their own responsibilities to the society. Building community in diverse classrooms does not happen by chance. It is the result of deliberate and planned efforts by thoughtful, competent, and caring educators.

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CHAPTER 6—FAMILIES

Offering Support and Joining in Partnership

Kathryn Delaney

A teacher, counting off the days until retirement, comments, "None of the course work from college prepared me for the type of students I now have in school. I have 1st-graders from five different nationalities who speak little or no English. Many of my students have never been read to, and they rarely see their parents. Then there are the children who have been abused or who are struggling to just survive. These students don't need a teacher, they need bilingual social workers and psychologists."

During a home visit, a single mother of two says to the teacher, "They tell me I am to work with Bobby on math every night. How can I do that when I have to work every evening, on my second job, until midnight? Besides, Bobby says they don't do math that way anymore."

Nations around the world are beginning to realize that schools cannot meet their students' complex needs without help. Changes in economic and family structures have presented both educators and families with significant challenges. Although the public is clamoring for better results from schools, governmental agencies are unable to provide adequate funding to meet children's resulting additional needs and therefore give them the opportunity to succeed, both in school and society. "In most nations, funding for education is too low to meet all needs. School systems need to be able to identify, mobilize, and organize all available resources and talents to support and extend programs and opportunities for all students" (Sanders & Epstein, 1998, p. 496).

Although I have been an advocate for parent and family involvement for years, my rationales had become almost rote: "Because it helps schools," "Because the research supports it," or "Because it is the parent's right to be a partner." I now understand the real reason for family involvement: Parents, families, teachers, and communities must become partners simply because we are all desperate. How are we, as teachers, going to meet the increasingly complex needs of the children coming into our classrooms? How are we, as parents, going to ensure that our children are gaining the skills and self-esteem needed for adulthood? How are we, as citizens, going to know that we will have the literate and intelligent citizenry that our communities and nation so desperately need? If we do not join together in partnership, none of those goals will be attainable. "Families and teachers might wish that the school could do the job alone. But today's schools need families and today's families need the school. In many ways, their mutual need may be the greatest hope for change" (Rich, 1987, p. 62).

For over 30 years, research consistently identified the many benefits for schools, students, and families when parents and families are involved in their child's school and education. Today, literally hundreds of new books, journal articles, and reports cover the subject of parent involvement. These writings include research reports, theory papers, program descriptions, guidelines for setting up programs, and many "expert opinions." Henderson (1989) conducted a comprehensive survey of more than 85 studies that document the profound and comprehensive benefits of parents and family members becoming participants in their children's education. "When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level" (National PTA, 1997).

The push to reform education through parent involvement is nothing new. A 1891 teachers' manual gave this advice: ". . . to more closely connect the kindergarten and home interests, mothers' meetings should be inaugurated; the objects of these gatherings being to give talks on the care of children, household duties, and the responsibility of motherhood." In the 1960s, the United States federal government began evaluating the state of education at the national level, in response to public concerns about whether the nation's schools were able to compete with those of other nations. During this period, many studies evolved that both emphasized the importance of family involvement and identified the lack of parent and family involvement in U.S. schools. Parent involvement has increased since 1891, and even since the 1960s; progress remains to be made, however. More than ever before, parents need to know how to better help their children at home, and teachers need to do a better job in helping children succeed in school. "In today's society, schools alone cannot meet all children's needs. The sheer number of at-risk children, problem situations, and changing demographics of American society dictate a collaborative stance" (Christenson, Franklin, & Rounds, 1992, p. 19).

Because educators have heard the "urgent call" for parent involvement before, this reform topic brings more yawns than perhaps any other. "Of course, we should involve parents," Sarason (1995) says. "Parent involvement is an aspect of educational reform that seems as virtuous as motherhood and patriotism" (p. 11). Yet, after all the reports and research, after even having the U. S. government consider it a Goals 2000 priority mission, the national rhetoric about partnership does not reflect the reality. Parents frequently report having little or no communication with school personnel.

Schools have changed greatly since the call for parent involvement in the 1960s. Nearly one in four children in the United States lives in poverty (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Although the United States has a higher incidence of child poverty than do other Western nations, the percentage of impoverished children in all populations continues to affect schools, teaching, and families. Monumental stresses are associated with the daily demands that families face. Parents often are pressured with careers and long commutes, and some may even have two or three jobs, leaving little time for being parents (Kagan, 1995). Many students come from single-parent households and many return from school to an empty house. Teachers can no longer assume that parents are providing the level of support and encouragement that children need at home to do well in school, nor can families assume that schools, alone, are able to provide for all of their child's physical, emotional, and learning needs.

Interest in and research on school, family, and community involvement are increasing all over the world. Due to the fall of communism and the spread of democratic systems of government in Eastern Europe and Latin America, new nations are entering the discussion about which policies will most effectively deal with students' and schools' problems (Sanders & Epstein, 1998). There is an increased desire to make schools more effective by inviting international collaborations.

While dealing with their students' increasingly diverse emotional and physical needs, teachers across the United States are feeling the pressure of accountability. Schools are under constant scrutiny and persistent criticism from the media and parents. Many teachers say the pressure to produce results has never been stronger (Hargreaves, 1995). In addition, several studies show that parent involvement in schools suffers because teachers do not understand the different family cultures or the circumstances that make parenting difficult for families of low socioeconomic status. Educators often describe families as having no interest in their children's education, and do not recognize the parents' feelings of alienation from the schools (Lewis, 1991). The pressured positions of both families and teachers can produce impenetrable walls between these segments of society that desperately need each other.

Definitions

What do we mean by "parent involvement"? First of all, due to changing family dynamics and identities, parent involvement is now often called "family involvement and support." School personnel must view a child's family as including grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, and neighbors. The whole paradigm of parent/family involvement is broader in scope and often includes the words "collaboration" and "partnership" to further describe the vision of a true parent/family/involvement climate for schools. Community agencies are also beginning to become closely involved with schools as everyone struggles with the limitations that poverty and social change place on children's futures. Some schools have agencies based in or near the school, to give parents and teachers easier and more effective access to support for children and their families. Seeley (1991) describes the evolving definition of partnership as follows:

> The concept of educational partnership calls for making education a shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities rather than a function delegated to bureaucratic agencies, and it calls for collaborative rather than bureaucratic structures for carrying out the responsibility. (p. 31)

Family involvement can refer to many different forms of participation in education and with schools. Parents can support their children's schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations (parent-teacher conferences, for example). They can become more involved in helping their children improve their schoolwork—providing encouragement, setting aside appropriate study time and space at home, modeling desired behavior (such as reading for pleasure), monitoring homework, and actively tutoring children. Outside the home, parents and families can serve as advocates for the school by volunteering to help out with school activities or work in the classroom. Another level of family involvement includes having parents and families take an active role in the governance and decision making necessary for planning, developing, and providing an education for the community's children.

Joyce Epstein, Director of the National Network of Partnership Schools, developed a framework of six major types of family involvement, which evolved from years of work with schools and families: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Underlying all six types are two dimensions of caring: trust and respect (Epstein, 1995).

The Source of the Controversy

Children, families, and schools have ever-burgeoning needs. We know from years of research that a climate and program of partnership among the child, parent, and school has profound benefits for all involved. So why haven't we developed true partnerships with families over the years? Why must we still replicate studies to establish what we already know? Is this just another source of reform rhetoric that neither school personnel nor parents have the time or real desire to carry out?

International Studies

Epstein's studies support the contention that parents all over the world love and care about their children, and are eager to obtain better information from schools to be good partners in their children's education. Her research also indicates that educators everywhere are becoming aware of families' increasing desires to communicate more effectively with teachers, keep track of their children's schooling, and influence important school decisions that affect their children and families. In all societies, some parents are very involved with their children's education at home and at school, while others are not. Internationally, the mother tends to be more involved than the father, parents of children in secondary schools are less involved than parents of elementary children, and parents with less formal education are less involved than parents with more education.

> Not all schools and not all nations are at the same point in their work on partnerships. Some focus on parent participation on school councils; others concentrate more on choice of schools than on what happens after the choice is made to involve families; some are looking deeply into helping families understand their children's school subjects and curricula, and others are working on improving general communications. A very important result of this international study is programs of school, family, and community partnerships determine whether, which, and how parents become involved in their children's education. (Sanders & Epstein, 1998, p. 482)

Power Struggles

Although it is again fashionable to proclaim the desirability of family involvement, some authors feel the issue of power for school personnel will continue to keep any genuine partnership from developing on a large scale. Many believe that a profession unaccustomed to including "outsiders" in its decision making will not do so without coercion. And when parent and family involvement is achieved through such external pressure, conflict is almost inevitable (Sarason, 1995).

Common Barriers

Although efforts may be well-intentioned, true parent/family/community involvement partnerships are still wishful thinking in many states and nations. Some of the challenges associated with initiating family involvement partnerships are common across nations; other challenges are created by a nation's unique history and social customs (1998).

Lack of Trust. More than one author blames the barrier between U.S. schools and parents on Americans' lack of trust in institutions, a phenomenon that grew during the Vietnam conflict (Brandt, 1998; Sarason, 1995). These authors believe that a lack of trust in authority, in general, erodes parents' confidence in teachers and schools.

Loss of Community. Still others feel there has been a real loss of community between families and schools. People often spend more time with television sets and computers than they do with their families. One study states that parents are spending 40 percent less time with their children than they did in 1960 (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1998). The estrangement of parents and schools is further aggravated by the demands of a high-pressure society, and by media attacks on public institutions in general, and on schools, in particular.

Studies of schools all over the world have found consistent categories of barriers that prevent the formation of good family/school/community partnerships:

1. *Traditions of separation between homes and schools.* Some studies point to teachers' false perceptions of a lack of support from the home, and to teachers not being comfortable with parents playing any roles in schools beyond small tasks. Some educators fear that involving families and others will decrease their professional status. A study in Australia found that although teachers believed parents should be informed about changes in school policies and curriculum developments, most did not want parents involved in important decision making. Parents in Hong Kong were found to have very little participation in school governance. Sanders and Epstein (1998) note that striving for professional autonomy will quickly build walls between families and schools.

Families often report feeling too intimidated to visit the school, especially if their own experiences with education were negative. Other parents are intimidated by messages and instructions from school that contain vocabulary they do not understand or directions about subjects with which they have had little or no experience. Also, parents do not want their child to know they are unable to understand the schoolwork, nor do they particularly want to admit this to the teacher.

Families complain about an unwelcome atmosphere in schools that can begin with a foreboding sign on the door requiring visitors to go to the office first, and continue with staff people who give them less than enthusiastic greetings. Often, a family's first, and sometimes only, visit to meet the teacher is in response to a conflict or problem. Such a negative situation may set up defensive walls from the beginning that many times neither the parent nor the teacher can get past.

Teachers also express concern about parents who "encroach" into their areas of responsibility, gossip about children and teachers, or do not follow rules of conduct when working or visiting in the classroom.

> For every success story, there are other stories of parent and community members being patronized, avoided, or ignored by school officials and faculty. The separation of schools from parents and community [has] led in some cases to community apathy or resignation and in other cases to a few of the most vocal and powerful parents redirecting school practices to serve their own narrow interests. (Glickman, 1998, p. 147)

2. *A history of teachers and parents blaming each other for students' learning problems.* When parents are poor and/or are not involved in school activities, teachers often believe that these parents "don't care," and they are apt to claim that these parents have inadequate skills. When lines of communication to families are difficult or rarely practiced, blaming the other parties in the partnership becomes easier.

Teachers rarely receive training on how to communicate effectively with families, handle conflicts, or create an atmosphere conductive to true partnerships. "Education and training is necessary for teachers and administrators to understand diverse families and to obtain the knowledge and skills needed to establish and maintain good programs of partnerships for all families and communities" (Sanders & Epstein, 1998, p. 25).

3. *Changing demographic conditions.* Seventy percent of mothers with school-age children are now in the work force, compared to 30 percent in 1960. About 1 million immigrants enter the United States each year, many of whom do not speak English. These changing demographics further complicate family/school relationships.

Family structures are changing as parents divorce and remarry. More mothers are educated and more are employed outside the home during the school day. As families move to new communities or new countries, they have fewer ties with their extended families. All of these factors require new ways of communicating.

4. *Considering family involvement to be a one-way street.* Many educators still think of family involvement in terms of what "parents should do" for schools—asking parents to volunteer or instructing parents how to help their child, thereby helping the teacher and school. True collaboration and partnerships will not survive with this limited perspective. Pett (1991) challenges schools to reconsider their mission—moving from deliverers of educational services toward brokers of multiple resources that can foster successful, productive children.

The question of parent/school/child contracts in mandated family involvement programs is troubling. To what extent can a school prescribe parent involvement activities? Can we really force families to become involved in their child's education? Holding parents responsible for the actions of their children is a growing trend in the United States. In South Carolina, for example, adults who are deemed to be lacking in parenting skills are required to attend parenting classes (Pardini, 1995). Several states are discussing the possibility of making parent training a condition for welfare eligibility (Raspberry, 1996).

Some educators have mixed feelings about such oversight, yet an increasing number of schools require the parents, child, and teacher to sign a "contract," which spells out each person's responsibilities. These contracts often have long lists of specific directions for parents, and shorter lists for the student and teacher.

A related technique is the use of rubrics for parents. In this technique, parents receive a letter, usually in connection with a special unit or project, that explains the unit or project and outlines activities or additional projects that could be done at home to reinforce their child's learning. The rubric explains the grades, or number of points, the child will receive for different levels of parent/student activity.

Schools that use contracts and rubrics as a way of forcing parents to be more responsible for their children, may hope to have parents share in the blame and pressure when schools are criticized. Currently, no state has a written policy concerning the schools' limits in demanding involvement, or concerning how families who choose not to sign such contracts can guarantee that such action will not result in punitive action toward their children (Center for Law in Education, personal communication, March 17, 1997). Advocates of family/school contracts argue that such "formal" partnerships could be a start toward "real" school reform.

5. *Lack of national and local policies for family and community involvement, and inadequate financial support.* Collaboration among families, schools, and community agencies takes much planning, training, and support, as well as policies to ensure continuation of the work. Family involvement without the policies and support will be doomed to be just another education "fad" that will disappear with time.

Implications and Recommendations

"The way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children's families" (Epstein, 1995, p. 2). Radically improving not only individual schools, but also the overall system of education, will take nothing less than a complete overthrow of past thinking. This revolution involves teachers abandoning positions of power and dominance, and admitting that only when parents, teachers, and students view one another as partners, will a caring community shelter the student and allow him or her to grow in all areas of life. Good partnerships will withstand conflicts and debates because the results will be well worth the effort.

Family Involvement and Support Goals

Educators should:

1. Develop true partnership thinking, not because parent/family involvement is the newest reform push, but rather because partnerships can lead to the best environment in which children and families can learn and be successful. Families should be re-

garded as rich resources with unique expertise. Families' opinions should be routinely and frequently sought. Parents and community members need to plan together, using support systems such as the one offered by the National Network of Partnership Schools.

2. Help redesign the concept of school into one of a community center of resources for students and families. Draw on the resources of the community to create business, agency, and medical partnerships to which families, teachers, and children can gain access. Open up the computer, library, and gym facilities to families. Offer parenting and other classes at the school, possibly through collaboration with a local college. Coordinate with community partners and agencies to develop after-school programs. Try to find a place for a "parent room" in your school where families can meet and mentor each other, pick up resources, read notices of upcoming events, and feel like a real part of a partnership with the school.

3. Seek out opportunities for professional development and training in family involvement skills, conflict management, and multiculturalism. Learn about the different learning styles, history, and accomplishments of the many cultures represented in your school. Try to visit your students' families at home at least once a year.

4. Refine communication skills with parents by making parents feel welcome and reaching out to families whose first language is not English. Investigate toll-free lines, E-mail, and parent telephone call nights; "good-news" notes; and newsletters for better communication with parents. Redesign conferences and meetings with more flexible times and locations in order to accommodate families' work schedules. Ask parents and families to help you redesign these schedules. Both teachers and families can benefit from workshops promoting cultural competence communication skills.

5. Provide frequent parent training sessions, and solicit parents' input when planning for these classes. Include sessions on subject-specific practices that families can use at home. Include ways for the family to interact with and evaluate the material that the child is learning. Make sure that the home activities are clear, appropriate for the skills and needs of students and families, and continually evaluated by all parties. Videotape sessions and provide copies for parents who cannot attend. When new curriculum is presented, bring parents in to explain it and train them on how to reinforce the concepts at home. Ask parents and families for ideas on how to incorporate their children's interests into the presentation of subject matter.

6. Include parents on most decision-making bodies in the school. Invite and include community and agency members to sit on policymaking boards and in collaborative decision-making teams that allocate educational resources. Provide tapes of meetings to parents who cannot attend a board meeting. Frequently ask for parents' input.

7. Encourage local autonomy and control by seeking parents' opinions on written family involvement policies. Inform all partners on policy decisions made at the state level. Become members of partnership organizations and stay informed about the latest research on best partnership methods.

8. Concentrate more research on finding out which specific techniques of parent/family involvement produce the best achievement results for the student. Encourage more research from the international community to broaden our understanding of school, family, and community partnerships. Encourage the study of history, geogra-

phy, politics, and legal frameworks related to family involvement in all cultures (Sanders & Epstein, 1998).

9. Encourage local teacher education programs to teach parent/family/community partnership techniques and conduct facilitative leadership training. Encourage colleges and universities to familiarize teaching interns with social and health agencies, and with child, family, and parenting agencies.

Conclusion

Educators have wasted many years trying to reform education on our own, as though only educators have the answers on how to increase the chances for a child's success in school and life. As society changes dramatically, we must admit that we do not have all the answers. We need others to help us. Many parents are simply struggling to survive and have neither the time nor the ability to motivate, guide, instruct, or reinforce their child's learning on their own. Communities are often unable to provide the environments that will allow families to live, work, and flourish.

"When decisions are made affecting you or your possessions, you should have a role, a voice in the process of decision making. You may call it a principle, a value, a right" (Sarason, 1995, p. 19). What advice might we offer to the mother and teacher described at the start of this chapter? Bobby's mother could call the school and ask for a conference with the teacher. Such communication with the teacher should be frequent. She could call the school's toll-free line to receive updates on Bobby's progress with his assignments. She could make sure to call the teacher on her call night and log onto the Internet for help on math nights. Bobby's family might consider placing him in an after-school program where he can receive additional tutoring and reinforcement on working with computers. When families cannot attend curriculum meetings, they can ask for tapes of the sessions. A schedule of family meetings should accommodate families' unique schedules.

The retiring teacher from the beginning of the chapter can be assured that she does not have to do it alone. People in agencies, businesses, and community groups want to be included in school/family partnerships. She can ask the families of her students to provide ideas on how best to meet their needs. Together, they can make a collaborative plan for the child. With help from a teacher, families can make use of agency and community help. Local colleges or universities may offer training on how best to deal with the diverse needs of students.

A global economy will force governments to invest further in research and develop policies on how to better educate and train their nations' students. An educated electorate will need to gain better understanding of other nations' differences in history, culture. and politics, and the strengths of families all over the world. Family involvement and support is a complex and significant challenge that can best be met through international and interprofessional collaboration with families.

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CHAPTER 7—PEDAGOGY

Finding a Place for Inquiry Methods and Direct Instruction

Kay A. Chick

Jane, a 3rd-grader in a multiage classroom, is functioning at a pre-primer level in reading. She has not made sufficient progress with the children's literature-based methods that had been used with her to this point. After a referral for special education services, Jane is pulled from the classroom for learning support in reading. After the special education teacher uses Direct Instruction, Jane begins to read independently. In only three months' time, Jane makes six months' progress.

Patterson Elementary School, a suburban elementary school of 625 students, is dedicated to inquiry-based learning approaches and a literature-based reading program. While many of Patterson's students are making excellent progress in reading, math, language, and spelling, other students are struggling academically and working below grade level. Through contacts at a local university, the principal at Patterson learns about Direct Instruction. Despite intense opposition from union representatives, parents, and some teachers, the school faculty begins a full-school implementation of Direct Instruction.

While the above two examples chronicle the implementation of a highly structured method of teaching called Direct Instruction, other schools are finding success with inquiry-based methods. Mrs. Yarnel, a kindergarten teacher, uses inquiry-based methods with her class as they become interested in flight and the construction of airplanes. She fosters this interest through reading, discussion, and art activities. The students decide to build a small-scale airplane, for which a large area of the classroom is set aside. Having brought in cardboard boxes, a steering wheel, and a motor from a lawn mower, the students begin construction. All of the 5- and 6-year-olds are actively involved in the project, and they enthusiastically discuss how they might get their airplane to fly.

Definition of Terms

Several terms are important when discussing the debate between inquiry methods and direct instruction. With a full understanding of these terms, educators can find a place for both of these instructional methods.

Inquiry-Based Learning is based on the premise that children are naturally curious, energetic, and eager to explore their environment and develop into independent learners. This method focuses on helping students raise interesting questions, react to puzzling events, and gain problem-solving skills. The inquiry-based method originates in the belief that all knowledge is tentative (Joyce & Weil, 1996). Inquiry-based learning is based on constructivism, a theory about knowledge and learning that is derived from cognitive psychology, philosophy, and anthropology. Constructivism views knowledge as temporary, developmental, and non-objective. Learning is defined as a self-regulatory process of knowledge construction and meaning-making, and is fostered through concrete experiences and reflection (Fosnot, 1996).

Direct instruction (di) is a general term that refers to behavioral features that describe a highly structured system of teacher-student interactions, many of which correlate with student achievement, such as group responses, corrections, and engaged time (Rosenshine, 1986). Direct Instruction (DI) (differentiated from di) is a specific strategy that is:

> an intensive intervention designed to increase not only the amount of learning but also its quality by systematically developing important background knowledge and explicitly applying it and linking it to new knowledge. In this process, mechanistic skills evolve into flexible strategies, concepts combine into schemata, and success in highly structured situations develops into successful performance in naturalistic, unpredictable, complex environments. (Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995, p. 1)

DISTAR, a registered trade name for Direct Instruction Systems for Teaching and Remediation, refers to a commercially available instructional program developed in the 1960s. This program was later expanded into a number of Direct Instruction programs.

The Source of the Controversy

Americans have become increasingly dissatisfied with public education. According to a 1996 Gallup poll, many Americans are now willing to spend public monies to support private schools (Lawton, 1996). If public education is to survive in the United States, it must change in order to produce better results (Grossen, 1996). This change process must begin with curriculum and instruction—or *what* we teach and *how* we teach it. In many school districts, teachers have moved toward constructivist, inquiry-based teaching approaches such as discovery learning, thematic teaching, and literature-based reading instruction. In others, teachers have adopted a seemingly oppositional method of teaching, or Direct Instruction.

This chapter will examine the controversies surrounding Direct Instruction and inquiry-based teaching and review the implications that these methods have for the future of classroom instruction and learning. Certain similarities exist between Direct Instruction and inquiry-based learning, and those similarities can lead to recommendations regarding these approaches and conclusions about their future in the public schools.

The History of Direct Instruction

The Direct Instruction Model grew out of research from the 1960s on teaching at-risk preschoolers. Bereiter and Engelmann (1966), at the University of Illinois, sought to close the educational gap experienced by these preschoolers by accelerating their cognitive growth. Engelmann, a philosopher and educator, assisted in the development of DISTAR programs in reading, language, and arithmetic. The goal of these programs was to teach more material in less time, so that at-risk students could catch up with their peers (Benjamin, 1981). In the early 1970s, Direct Instruction became one of the nine programs of Project Follow Through, a federally funded project designed to extend Head Start programs into the elementary grades (Watkins, 1988). Since that time, Direct Instruction has been expanded into instructional programs that range from reading to chemistry to history, and that are available through Science Research Associates (SRA) (Rose, 1997).

The History of Inquiry-Based Teaching Methods

The roots of constructivism can be traced to the work of John Dewey in the late 1800s, and the research of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner from the 1920s to the 1960s. These theorists were dissatisfied with traditional instructional methods, which had little emphasis on problem solving or reflective thinking, and a focus on rote memory. They believed that children needed to be actively involved in their own learning by investigating and discovering for themselves. Only through this active construction of knowledge could students learn to think critically and solve their own problems (Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Fosnot, 1996; Marlowe & Page, 1998).

Since the early 1980s, a wealth of literature has supported the application of constructivist principles to the classroom. Standards in reading and mathematics, curriculum frameworks in several states, and national education organizations support the constructivist philosophy. The move toward constructivism has remained superficial, however, as teachers begin to change their views on how children learn and as they bring inquiry-based methods into their teaching (Marlowe & Page, 1998).

Teaching and Learning Philosophy

Although research on teaching effectiveness and learning is extensive, educators and researchers do not always agree on the most productive methods for enhancing students' learning. The source of the controversy surrounding Direct Instruction and inquiry methods begins with philosophies about how students learn and how teachers should teach. In fact, many educators suggest that these models are derived from "two opposing world views" (Tarver, 1996, p. 143).

An Overview of Direct Instruction Philosophy. Direct Instruction has been characterized as "minutely sequenced and highly structured," so that the program "leaves nothing to chance" (Benjamin, 1981, p. 71). The repetition and group response that is incorporated into Direct Instruction has been construed by some educators as "the thalidomide of education" (Benjamin, 1981, p. 74). One New York City principal is quoted as saying:

> The technique of DISTAR is so utterly contrary to what teachers have been taught about student-teacher relationships and pedagogy. No conscientious principal or teacher in his right mind would stay in the room more than five minutes before walking out in total disgust. (Benjamin, 1981, p. 74)

Yet the followers of Direct Instruction assert that it is not a traditional teacher-dominated approach (Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995), nor is it what constructivists assume it to be (Tarver, 1996). Although it has been characterized as a "reductionist, atomistic, part-whole approach" (Tarver, 1996, p. 146), some educators believe that it is more accurately described as "combinative, integrative, and holistic" (Tarver, 1996, p. 146). According to Tarver (1996), principles of both behaviorism and holism are incorporated into Direct Instruction, and it is consistent with some of the principles of constructivism.

The behaviorist components of Direct Instruction include specification of objectives, immediate feedback, and reinforcement, as well as components of the generic direct instruction models such as engaged time, guided practice, and correction procedures. Because these components of Direct Instruction are easily observed, they often are viewed as the *only* features of Direct Instruction. Therefore, it is often mistakenly classified as a behavioral/reductionist approach, without consideration of the features that make it holistic in nature (Tarver, 1996).

The Direct Instruction model is based on the following principles:

- All children can learn. "If the student hasn't learned, the teacher hasn't taught" (Tarver, 1996, p. 149).
- If students are working below grade level, they must be taught at a faster rate if they are to catch up with their peers.
- Daily activities are structured carefully and paced rapidly so as not to waste academic time.
- Instructional programs emphasize generalizations, so that knowledge can be applied in other situations (Adams & Engelmann, 1996).

As we consider these principles, we must ask ourselves whether the philosophy of Direct Instruction really is in opposition to constructivist philosophy.

An Overview of Constructivist Philosophy. Constructivism is considered a student-centered approach to teaching and learning in which students actively construct their own meaning, rather than passively being filled with knowledge (Reid & Stone, 1991). Constructivism differs from Direct Instruction philosophy in that constructivist teachers guide or facilitate students' learning, rather than directing it. Inquiry-based, constructivist teaching methods are characterized by real-life experiences that are complex and interactive, curricular themes that incorporate literature, and problems that require critical thinking and creativity (Caine & Caine, 1994). In the constructivist approach, learning is a process by which novices become experts (Bruer, 1993). Such learning is a social process and dialogue is often the central method for teaching and learning (Means & Knapp, 1991; Reid & Stone, 1991). Based on the research of cognitive psychologists, constructivism focuses on the mental processes that occur as students learn. The principles of constructivism are:

- Learning involves actively constructing meaning, rather than passively receiving, accumulating, or memorizing information (Marlowe & Page, 1998).
- Curriculum is student-centered, incorporates problems that are relevant to students, and is adapted to address students' ideas and hypotheses.
- Learning is centered around conceptual themes and assessment occurs within the context of teaching (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).
- Learning is facilitated through meaningful reflection on the learning process and dialogue with peers (Fosnot, 1996).

The constructivist philosophy, although revered by many, has its share of criticism as well. Some special educators believe that constructivism is poorly structured and that it is not helpful to special needs students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994), while others find cognitively based instruction and hands-on approaches to be compatible with the learning characteristics of students with disabilities (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1996). Certainly, not all educators are convinced that constructivist methods accelerate the learning of all children, especially those who are at-risk for school failure.

Differences in Reading Philosophy

Differences between Direct Instruction and constructivism, in regard to reading philosophy, center on the importance of readiness and skill acquisition. In classrooms where teachers ascribe to a whole language, constructivist philosophy, children are exposed to print-rich environments, involved in integrated reading and writing activities, and included in the reading of predictable stories and picture books (Routman, 1997). Teachers maintain a child-centered classroom by focusing on developmentally appropriate practices, and so they may not necessarily be concerned if students are not reading independently by the end of 1st grade.

Teachers who have been trained in Direct Instruction do not wait until students are developmentally ready before teaching them to read. Instead, students who are considered to be developmentally delayed begin to read with Direct Instruction at age 6 or 7 (Adams & Engelmann, 1996). The creators of Direct Instruction believe that certain skills and abilities can predict future success in reading, such as phonological awareness. They propose that some students must learn these skills directly and systematically. After acquiring this set of subskills, these competencies can be assimilated into a more holistic approach to reading and comprehension. Decoding is one major focus in skills instruction. Direct Instruction researchers suggest that reading failure can be avoided if all students participate in "code-emphasis" reading programs with teachers who have been adequately trained (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997, p. 56).

Major Components of Direct Instruction and Constructivist Models

Major Components of Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction materials are based on effective principles of instructional design and include explicit teaching of rules and strategies; sequencing of examples and nonexamples so that students learn concepts more quickly; and immediate correction and feedback—all of which have been researched and validated (Kinder & Carnine, 1991). Students are placed in small, homogeneous groups by skill level, which is viewed as the most efficient way to individualize lessons. These groups are flexible; regrouping occurs as students' performance changes (Adams & Engelmann, 1996).

From a constructivist perspective, the issue of control would appear to be intolerable, but there are advantages for students and teachers. Unison oral responding encourages active student involvement and gives the teacher immediate feedback on student progress (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997). In some classrooms, students' time on task is greater than 95 percent and behavior problems are minimal. Signaling, or cueing students to respond, gives all students time to think, without feeling pressured to anxiously call out the answers. In addition, because programs are structured and teachers are not involved in writing curriculum, they are able to focus their efforts on instruction and students' needs. Finally, the scripts for all instructional programs are field tested, and are not available for use until 90 percent of students master lessons the first time they are presented (Benjamin, 1981; Rose, 1997). Direct Instruction is, therefore, one of the few instructional programs that has been found effective with children prior to its widespread use in the classroom.

Major Components of Constructivist Models

Because it is a theory of learning and not a description of teaching, there are no specifically prescribed methods of instruction for teachers who ascribe to a constructivist, inquiry-based philosophy. Although many find beauty in the anti-prescriptive nature of constructivism, others find it both curious and troubling, considering that constructivism is clearly the reason behind many calls for education reform (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). Education researchers have applied cognitive learning theory to instructional practices, however, and have made recommendations to help classroom teachers design effective teaching strategies.

The essence of constructivist teaching is that students learn by doing, which places the classroom teacher in the role of coach or facilitator (Perkins, 1992). In heterogeneous groups, students participate in hands-on, experiential learning and active problem solving, continuously reflecting on their learning processes. They learn domain specific learning strategies through scaffolding, which is the support offered by teachers and more capable peers. Through the verbal problem solving and dialogue provided by these experts, students are able to achieve above the level they could reach on their own (Reid & Stone, 1991).

Cognitive researchers contend that meaningful learning takes place through creative experiences. Some believe that the creative teaching methods usually reserved for gifted students should be implemented with all students (Caine & Caine, 1994). Caine and Caine (1994) recommend that "students have experiences that are similar in complexity, challenge, and creativity to those of creative experts" (p. 117). Such experiences will improve not only comprehension, but also the transfer of learning. Students remember demonstrations, projects, field trips, drama, and interactive experiences that are personally meaningful and challenging. Integrated curriculum, thematic teaching, cooperative learning, authentic assessment, and performance-based exhibitions, if designed according to constructivist principles, make the learning in many elementary classrooms complex and stimulating (Caine & Caine, 1994).

The Research Base on Direct Instruction and Constructivism

Does Direct Instruction Work?

The research base on Direct Instruction comes from international studies and from two major sources in the United States: Project Follow Through, which compared Direct Instruction to over 20 other approaches for teaching disadvantaged children, and a 1996 review of 34 studies comparing Direct Instruction with other teaching approaches (Adams & Engelmann, 1996). Project Follow Through, the largest federally funded research study ever conducted (Stebbins, St. Pierre, Proper, Anderson, & Cerva, 1977), found that traditional basal approaches and constructivist approaches had fewer benefits than Direct Instruction. Direct Instruction was the only model that brought students close to, or at, national norms in all measures (Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995; Lindsley, 1992). Direct Instruction also produced the most significant results on measures of self-esteem and creativity (Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Bock, Stebbins, & Proper, 1977).

The 1996 meta-analysis of 34 studies comparing Direct Instruction to other teaching approaches found that Direct Instruction was favored 80 percent of the time for regular education students and 90 percent of the time for special education students (Adams & Engelmann, 1996). Australian studies found Direct Instruction to be effective with normal students, mildly disabled students in regular and special classes, disadvantaged and migrant children, and children with moderate to severe disabilities (Condon & Maggs, 1986). Researchers involved in these studies contend that such positive outcomes are unique in education research (Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Condon & Maggs, 1986).

Research from individual school sites corroborates these findings. At Wesley Elementary School in Houston, Texas, where 80 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches, students consistently outperform students in the affluent suburbs by one or two grade levels (Rose, 1997), and test scores are above the national averages (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997). Compared to 1975, when 40 percent of the 6th-graders in this school could not read at all, these results represent a major accomplishment for teachers and students (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997).

A recent longitudinal study conducted by High/Scope, however, compared Direct Instruction with the High/Scope Preschool Curriculum and traditional nursery school.

This study suggests that at age 23, participants of Direct Instruction preschool programs exhibited more misconduct, had more arrests, and were treated for emotional impairment more often than individuals from the other groups. Researchers attribute the absence of these behaviors in graduates of High/Scope and traditional nursery school programs to the emphasis on social objectives and social reasoning, which they suggest are not included in Direct Instruction programs (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997).

In February 1999, "An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform," a report commissioned by five leading education groups and published by the American Institutes for Research, evaluated 24 school reform models to determine which ones were most effective in improving student achievement. Along with High Schools That Work and Success For All, Direct Instruction was given a strong rating because its implementation resulted in higher test scores and improved attendance (Olson, 1999). In addition, the American Federation of Teachers recently chose Direct Instruction as one of six promising school reform models and schools can now apply for federal grant monies to implement it (Viadero, 1999). Reviews of the effectiveness of Direct Instruction can be found on the World Wide Web in:

- *An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform* at www.aasa.org (American Institutes for Research, 1999)
- *Six Promising School Reform Programs* at www.aft.org/edissues/whatworks/six/index.htm (American Federation of Teachers, 1999)
- *Promising Practices in Education Policy Database* at www.ecs.org (Education Commission of the States, 1999).

If the positive academic impact of Direct Instruction has been known since the 1970s, why haven't more schools adopted the model? Barriers to acceptance exist because the American education system measures the worth of instructional approaches not by the results, but rather by whether the approaches fit current philosophy on how children should be taught (Benjamin, 1981). The structured nature of Direct Instruction materials, the scripted lessons, the use of signaling to cue students for choral responses, and homogeneous grouping are some of the most controversial aspects of this program, from the perspective of currently accepted philosophy. It is a system that "attempts to control all the variables that make a difference in the performance of children" (Adams & Engelmann, 1996, p. ix). For these reasons, teachers sometimes have negative preconceptions about Direct Instruction. In one case, teachers who implemented Direct Instruction only after a court order reported being uncomfortable with the scripted lessons, until they saw students' reading skills improving far beyond their expectations (Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995). Some researchers believe that colleges of education have attempted to refute the findings of Project Follow Through because the most successful models, Direct Instruction and Behavior Analysis, differed philosophically from those in higher education. A recent article, "Effective Education Squelched" (Cheney, 1999), suggests that colleges of education view Direct Instruction as "pedagogically incorrect" and, therefore, do not teach it (p. A22). In a review of textbooks used to prepare preservice educators, Cheney (1999) found only one mention of Direct Instruction.

Does Constructivism Work?

An assessment of the effectiveness of constructivist teaching methods is hindered by its broad interpretations and lack of prescribed methods. Some educators view constructivism as an umbrella term under which all types of thematic teaching, literature-based instruction, and whole language philosophies can be subsumed. Others contend that only those approaches based on the research of cognitive psychologists, such as reciprocal teaching (Brown & Palincsar, 1987), are constructivist in nature because they are designed according to how students think, remember, and learn. If we examine the research on this more narrow definition of constructivist teaching methods, it becomes obvious that cognitively based techniques are very effective in improving students' academic skills. In one study by Schlenker (1976), inquiry-based methods helped students to better understand science concepts, engage in creative thinking, and gain and evaluate new information. Constructivist methods may not be appropriate for all children, however, especially in the area of reading. According to some researchers, constructivist approaches to reading have the potential to negatively affect 20 to 25 percent of children, because the relationship between letters and sounds is not made explicit (Liberman & Liberman, 1990).

Similarities Between Direct Instruction and Constructivism

On the surface, there appear to be no commonalities between Direct Instruction and constructivist approaches. Further analysis of the models, however, reveals several similarities in philosophy and classroom practices, especially with respect to at-risk students. As stated earlier, Direct Instruction is consistent with some constructivist principles. First, Direct Instruction is holistic, as is constructivism, because it is a whole-part-whole approach. Curriculum developers begin with a whole knowledge system, such as mathematics, analyze its parts, and then recombine them into the whole (Tarver, 1996).

Second, both Direct Instruction and inquiry-based learning emphasize the importance of background knowledge. Since we cannot assume that children will come to school with the schemas that they need for formal instruction, these models seek to ensure that we teach conceptual prerequisites to children (Bruer, 1993; Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995). Direct Instruction carefully controls and builds the required background knowledge so that students can comprehend and engage in problem solving and critical thinking.

Third, students must be able not only to just memorize information, but also to explain, predict, and generalize knowledge to other problems (Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995). This focus on teaching generalization, a priority in both the Direct Instruction and constructivist models, is much more efficient than rote learning and it allows students' learning to accelerate (Adams & Engelmann, 1996).

Fourth, proponents of Direct Instruction and cognitive psychology agree that knowledge has to be organized to show patterns, linkages, and interconnections so that students can gain easy access to the information they have learned. Much traditional instruction does not facilitate such linkages (Caine & Caine, 1994; Kinder & Carnine, 1991; Prawat, 1989).

Fifth, both Direct Instruction and constructivism prioritize the teaching of higher cognitive functioning (Bruer, 1993; Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995; Perkins, 1992). Research on Direct Instruction demonstrates that at-risk students can be taught higher level subjects and skills, such as literary analysis, chemistry, critical thinking, ratio and proportions, and metacognition (Carnine & Kameenui, 1992). Intensive, teacher-directed instruction is not incompatible with higher-order thinking, as some might believe, as long as students first understand the underlying schemata for that particular knowledge base (Carnine, Grossen, & Silbert, 1995).

Most important, Direct Instruction and constructivism agree on the best strategies for teaching students who are at-risk of academic failure. Conventional approaches to teaching such at-risk students focus on basic, lower-level skills, which are less challenging and more repetitive. These students typically have less exposure to higher-level reasoning and problem-solving tasks (Means & Knapp, 1991). While we know that high-ability students will do well with almost any instructional approaches, as long as they spend adequate time on academically related activities (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997), constructivists acknowledge that students who are at-risk often do not learn spontaneously from new experiences, and so they need direct instruction on learning the relevant facts and strategies to use. Many of these students do not realize that they do not comprehend class material and so they, typically, use very few metacognitive strategies. For them, metacognitive strategy instruction must be overt and explicit (Bruer, 1993). Less skilled students need clear descriptions and examples, active engagement in thoughtful practice and reflection, informative feedback about their performance, and activity that is rewarded either extrinsically or intrinsically (Perkins, 1992).

As we examine the six principal commonalities between Direct Instruction and constructivist, inquiry-based learning, we must acknowledge that some educators might disagree that these similarities exist. An in-depth analysis of both approaches, however, makes it apparent that we are describing instruction that:

- Emphasizes the holistic nature of learning through whole-part-whole curriculum design
- Stresses the importance of background knowledge
- Teaches generalizations that can be applied to other problems
- Emphasizes the patterns and linkages in the knowledge base
- Prioritizes higher-level thinking
- Provides direct instruction in relevant facts and metacognitive strategies to at-risk learners.

While Direct Instruction and constructivist teaching differ in many ways, they share commonalities in perhaps the most critical elements of the learning process. Direct Instruction builds these elements into the instructional materials, so that even novices or teachers with below-average teaching skills can teach students successfully and make reliable predictions about their progress (Adams & Engelmann, 1996). Research-based, constructivist approaches to teaching also can result in excellent academic progress and well-developed problem-solving skills. Because constructivism is a theory of learning, however, and not a specific teaching model, many teachers must build in these critical elements on their own as they design thematic units and authentic experiences for children. While Direct Instruction can be implemented by any teacher with adequate training, it takes a highly skilled teacher to be able to design curriculum that considers students' background knowledge, teaches the generalizations, patterns, and linkages in the knowledge base, emphasizes higher-level thinking, and includes explicit strategy instruction for at-risk learners. For these reasons, it may be that many students are not receiving the full benefits from constructivist approaches.

Implications/Recommendations

The following recommendations may lead to a more balanced approach to instruction that capitalizes on both the similarities and differences between Direct Instruction and inquiry-based learning.

Consider the Research Before Making Curricular Decisions

In order for educators to make informed decisions about children and ensure best practices, we must be a research-based profession. Educators no longer can rely on fads, whims, or that which is considered to be developmentally appropriate, unless the instructional practices can be proven to produce lasting results with students. Those teaching approaches that do not result in academic gains for students across numerous research sites should not be utilized in classrooms or be considered a part of our professional knowledge base (Grossen, 1996). Jane, the 3rd-grader described at the beginning of this chapter who made significant progress in reading with Direct Instruction, was expected to make such gains; predictions of progress with Direct Instruction have been validated through research.

Select Approaches That Meet Individual Needs

We cannot assume that any one approach will work for all children, nor are we in search of a panacea. While some proponents of Direct Instruction and constructivism contend that their instructional approaches will meet the needs of both highly skilled and less skilled students (Engelmann, 1997; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1996), teachers must examine both the research base and students' individual needs in order to select the best approaches. For example, although we know that highly skilled students perform very well as a result of Direct Instruction, the authors also concede that these students will do well in almost any program that provides quality time in reading-related activities (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997). When we allow ourselves to focus on the similarities between the two models, it becomes apparent that schools do not have to choose one or the other. Teachers need spend only about 2 1/2 hours each day to implement Direct Instruction programs in reading, language, and math (Benjamin, 1981), leaving ample time to utilize other approaches. Patterson Elementary School, which made the decision to do a school-wide implementation of Direct Instruction, might have avoided the intense opposition they faced had they emphasized the commonalities between Direct Instruction and the literature-based approaches to reading instruction that were already in place.

Become an Expert in Constructivist Methods

If teachers are to apply constructivist principles successfully in their classrooms, they must first be trained in constructivist learning theory and in ways to convert this theory into valid instructional approaches. If inquiry-based learning is to reap its full benefits for students, teachers must be able to understand and utilize the principles of constructivism in the design of effective instruction. For many teachers, this will require intense staff development efforts and follow-up training in the classroom. In addition, teachers must keep in mind that the term "constructivism" is broad based, interpreted in numerous ways, and not necessarily indicative of research-based practices. For these theories to be transformed into successful teaching strategies, they must be based on research from the field of cognitive science. Mrs. Yarnel, the kindergarten teacher who encouraged her students' interest in flight through the construction of an airplane, applied the principles of constructivism through the use of the Project Approach (Katz & Chard, 1989).

Provide Strategy Instruction to At-Risk Students

Since research on Direct Instruction and constructivism appears to agree on the most successful approaches for working with students who are at risk of academic failure, teachers must become proficient with these tested teaching techniques. At-risk students often require direct instruction in the relevant facts and strategies to use in each knowledge base, as well as overt, explicit metacognitive strategy instruction (Bruer, 1993). In addition, if classroom instruction is to take place in small, homogeneous groups, teachers must ensure that the groups are flexible and fluid, allowing students, especially those who are considered to be at risk, to change groups as their performance changes.

Conclusion

Not long ago, *Reading Today* surveyed literacy leaders to discover what they considered to be the "hot" topics in reading research and practice. Respondents were asked to rate each topic as "hot" if it was receiving current and positive attention in literacy education, and "not hot" if it was receiving negative or less attention. Survey results reveal that Direct Instruction went from "hot" in the spring of 1997 to "very hot" in the spring of 1998. Constructivism was "hot" in 1998 and balanced reading instruction was "extremely hot" (Cassidy & Wenrich, 1998). These results suggest that both Direct Instruction and inquiry methods have a place in the field of education, and that perhaps a balanced approach to instruction would ensure the success of more children.

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Reconciling Phonics and Whole Language: What Every Reading Teacher Should Know

Xiaoping Li

Ann Zhang, a 7-year-old Chinese girl, has just joined my class. She cannot speak a single English word. Should I use a whole language approach or systematic phonics instruction?

Eddie Santo, a Hispanic boy, has poor spelling skills. Should he be allowed to read literature before he masters basic spelling?

John Smith hates reading, and his parents are concerned. How should I involve them in John's literacy development?

Reading instruction controversies like the ones above are not unusual, especially in increasingly diverse societies. Sociocultural perspectivists (Au, 1993; O'Flahavan & Seidl, 1997; Raphael & Hiebert, 1996) believe that the fundamental purpose of school-based literacy instruction should be to diversify students' abilities to use many and varied forms of literacy in the pursuit of a broad range of personal and social interests. To this end, any reading instruction approach must embrace reading as both a social and cognitive act (Au, 1993, 1997; Freire & Macedo, 1998). In other words, this view espouses different models of teaching as different points on a continuum, with phonics instruction being a relatively decontextualized approach and whole language a more contextualized one (Gunderson, 1997; Raphael & Hiebert, 1996).

"Thoughtful instructional models are essential to help us think analytically about teaching; however, teachers are encouraged to see models as tools to be adapted, not as panaceas to be adopted" (Duffy, 1997, p. 363). Teachers need to establish a theory-based philosophy, study the research, and make informed decisions about instruction methods (Duffy, 1997).

Therefore, before educators take a stance, they should ask themselves three questions: 1) What are the philosophical, psychological, and developmental theories behind each literacy instruction model?; 2) What is the role of reading instruction, the student, and the teacher in each model?; and 3) What are the strengths and limitations of each model?

These questions will be addressed in this chapter from a sociocultural perspective. The author will: 1) introduce the phonics/whole language debate from the perspective of education philosophy, education psychology, and literacy development theory; 2) examine recent research on reading instruction; and 3) discuss implications of the current reading research trends and make recommendations for reconciling the phonics and whole language debate.

Phonics Versus Whole Language: A Heated Debate

During the past decade, teachers and parents have witnessed a series of heated debates on the most basic issues of reading instruction—what to teach and how to teach it (Chall, 1992). Phonics instruction represents the various teaching practices that focus on developing students' ability to decode words by matching the letters to their corresponding sounds (Stahl & Hayes, 1997). Whole language is a literature-based approach to language teaching that immerses students in authentic communication situations whenever possible (Froese, 1996). The distinction between these approaches is fundamentally rooted in three theoretical bases: education philosophy, education psychology, and literacy development theory (Dechant, 1991; Froese, 1996; Goodman, 1989; Sadker & Sadker, 1997; Stahl & Hayes, 1997; Sulzby, 1991; Teale, 1994).

Education Philosophy Bases

Conventional phonics classrooms reflect essentialism, while whole language is rooted in progressivism (Froese, 1996; Goodman, 1989; Shannon, 1990). Essentialism is an education theory based on the positivist philosophical tradition (Sadker & Sadker, 1997). Essentialists assume that an objective reality exists that can be measured and modeled. In essentialist classrooms, teachers are considered dispensers of knowledge and students are passive knowledge recipients. As a result, evaluation usually takes the form of standardized tests or other "objective" evaluations.

Progressivism is an anti-traditional theory associated with child-centered learning through activities, problem solving, and projects (Sadker & Sadker, 1997). Progressivists believe that reality is organized and experienced by the individual. In progressivist classrooms, teachers are considered knowledge facilitators and students are active learners; thus, learning is a lifelong experience. Evaluation is a collaborative effort by both students and teachers.

Education Psychology Bases

From a psychological point of view, phonics reflects a behaviorist perspective that has dominated American education for decades, while the whole language movement grew from contemporary cognitive psychology (Dechant, 1991; McCaslin, 1989; Pearson, 1989).

The behaviorist perspective explains learning in terms of observable (or inferred) stimulus and response events. Behaviorists view mental activities, such as thinking, like any other activity, attempting to break the behavior into its molecular elements (Hamilton & Ghatala, 1994). Conversely, cognitive theorists assert that behavior cannot be understood by analyzing its component parts. Cognitivists emphasize central processes and are interested in behavior primarily as a means of inferring mental activity (Hamilton & Ghatala, 1994).

Literacy Development Theory Bases

Reading Readiness and Emergent Literacy are the two most common literacy development theories (Sulzby, 1991; Teale, 1994). Phonics is rooted in reading readiness theory, while whole language proponents base their practice on emergent literacy (Froese, 1996; Sulzby, 1991; Teale, 1994). Advocates of reading readiness theory argue that learning to read begins only after a set of prerequisite perceptual and prereading skills have been mastered; all children, say these theorists, pass through the same sequence of skill development in learning to read. Reading readiness proponents, therefore, emphasize teaching separate skills in an isolated manner, a practice that lends itself to instruction in phonics.

In contrast, advocates of emergent literacy theory maintain that literacy development can begin very early in life for virtually all children, and that children move into conventional literacy in different ways and at different rates (Teale, 1994). For example, advocates of emergent literacy theory view scribbling and recognizing a McDonald's logo as signs of emergent literacy. They emphasize meaningful bases of literacy development and believe that skill teaching, such as phonics instruction, should arise out of such contexts.

In short, phonics/reading readiness advocates and whole language/emergent literacy advocates have very different perspectives about reading instruction in terms of children's literacy development, the role of students and teachers, and the role of reading instruction and assessment.

- Phonics/reading readiness advocates believe that literacy begins only after a set of skills has been mastered, and that all children pass through the same sequence of skills learning in literacy, while whole language/emergent literacy advocates believe that literacy is a natural continuum from birth and that young children move into literacy in different ways at different rates (Froese, 1996; Sulzby, 1991; Teale, 1994).
- Phonics advocates view curriculum as isolated and separate, while whole language advocates view curriculum as negotiable and integrated (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991; Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1988).
- Phonics/reading readiness advocates view students as passive recipients and teachers as sole knowledge dispensers and directors, while whole language/emergent literacy advocates view students as active participants and teachers as co-learners and guides (Farris & Kaczmarski, 1988; Goodman, 1989).
- Phonics/reading readiness advocates view assessment as separate from teaching, using it to measure isolated skills under artificial conditions using traditional assessment, while whole language/emergent literacy advocates view assessment as an ongoing process involving teacher observations, student exhibitions, and portfolios (Harste, 1994).

Examining the Phonics/Whole Language Debate From a Sociocultural Perspective

To examine the phonics and whole language debate, one has to be aware of how the definition of literacy has changed dramatically since the mid-20th century. In the 1940s and '50s, definitions were based largely on the number of years of formal school completed. For example, UNESCO has contended that maintaining permanent literacy requires at least four years of primary schooling (Cassidy & Gray, 1992). Furthermore, William S. Gray, a leading early authority in reading in the United States, has stated that only four or five years of schooling are needed to gain enough skill to continue competent reading (Cassidy & Gray, 1992).

Using number of years of schooling to define literacy is a questionable practice, however, since the skill level of individual students differs markedly even in the same grade level (Cassidy & Gray, 1992). Contemporary definitions of literacy have taken a dramatically different approach (Jalongo, 2000). For example, Regie Routman, an advocate of whole language, offered the following definition: "Genuine literacy implies using reading, writing, thinking and speaking daily in the real world with options, appreciation and meaningful purposes in various settings and with other people" (Routman, 1995, p. 15).

Kathryn Au, noted for her work in multicultural education, has generated this definition of literacy: "Literacy is defined as: the ability and the willingness to use reading and writing to construct meaning from printed text, in ways [that] meet the requirements of a particular social context" (Au, 1993, p. 20).

Paulo Freire, a critical theory pioneer, and his colleague have this definition for literacy:

> For the notion of literacy to become meaningful it has to be situated within a theory of cultural production and viewed as an integral part of the way in which people produce, transform, and reproduce meaning. Hence, it is an eminently political phenomenon, and it must be analyzed within the context of a theory of power relations and an understanding of social and cultural reproduction and production. (Freire & Macedo, 1998, p. 194).

In short, literacy is not only personal, but also social, cultural, and political; it involves reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking meaningfully in the proper personal, social, cultural, and political contexts.

Why have the definitions of literacy changed? Au (1993) believes that whatever the definition, the extent of literacy and illiteracy reflects social conditions. Not since the 1930s has the ethnic composition of the nation's children been so diverse. Non-whites now account for almost one-third of the U.S. population of children and youth. While these trends pose new opportunities, they also present serious challenges to literacy education. When culturally and linguistically diverse children enter school, they are likely to lack school-related experiences. Insufficient literacy experiences and exposure to literature from their own culture or from traditional American literature may inhibit their early success in literacy instruction. According to the National Assessment on Education Progress (NAEP),.48 percent of African Americans and 42 percent of Hispanics in 1994 fell below "basic" reading standards (Binkley & Williams, 1996). All these challenges support the use of a sociocultural perspective to reexamine present reading instruction.

Limitations of the Phonics Approach

A phonetic approach is relatively effective in helping children master the sub-skills of reading (such as decoding words with short vowels) (Stahl & Hayes, 1997). From a sociocultural perspective, however, the phonics approach has at least three limitations. First, rather than emphasizing the role of literate behavior embedded within cultural activity, phonics focuses on cognitive aspects of individual literate behavior and practice, with little regard for the cultural contexts of literate practice (Gunderson, 1997; Raphael & Hiebert, 1996). Applebee (1991) suggests that the process involved in reading may vary depending on the nature of the reading task, and on the reader's goals and purposes. These processes may also depend on the instructional context, the writer's own history, and the writer's knowledge base. A phonics model tends to overlook or dismiss important features, such as the social and cultural context in which literacy learning occurs. Denying the importance of such factors may lead to decontextualized learning of sub-skills or routines.

Second, rather than base their instruction on the background that their students bring to the material to be learned, teachers using the phonics model (Baumann, 1988; Rosenshine, 1986) stress academically focused, teacher-directed instruction that relies on sequenced and structured materials in isolated contexts—a typical practice of behaviorism. In phonics classrooms, teachers are viewed as dispensers of knowledge, and students are viewed as passive knowledge recipients.

Third, a phonics model emphasizes strategy training apart from the personal and social functions served by literacy practice (Gunderson, 1997; Raphael & Hiebert, 1996). The role of cultural activity in literacy learning is a secondary concern. According to Rosenblatt (1994), texts and situations are subject to a variety of interpretations, depending on the knowledge and perspective of the reader. Meaning is not thought to reside solely in the text or solely in the mind of the reader, but rather in the dynamic interaction or transaction among the reader, the text, and the social context.

In most cases, literacy experiences at home prepare students for effective participation in the activity structures of the classroom, resulting in cultural congruence between home and school (Adams, 1990). In an increasingly diverse society, however, home and school experiences bear little resemblance to one another (Erickson, 1987). For example, Moll and his colleagues (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalea, 1992) surveyed the household "funds of knowledge" represented in one classroom of 30 children from low-income households. A composite portrait revealed remarkable diversity. Heath (1983) contrasted the diverse literacy practices and traditions of two working-class communities located in the same city within the Piedmont region of the United States. Heath found that the two communities contained different literacy materials and that the social and individual practices also differed.

Limitations of Whole Language Instruction

The major strength of the whole language perspective is its focus on the child as a dynamic and active learner rather than as a passive knowledge recipient. However, the whole language view is not without its limits either (McCarthey & Raphael, 1992; Stahl & Hayes, 1997).

First, whole language's notion of universal, invariant stages across cultures has not held up empirically, because it fails to take into account vast differences in ways of thinking within society (Laboratory for Comparative Human Cognition, 1983; Scribner

& Cole, 1981). For example, although there is some evidence that many students make significant progress in whole language classrooms, substantive findings supporting whole language are inconsistent (McKenna, Robinson, & Miller, 1990). Outcomes of whole language instruction are not as clear with non-native English speakers or students who come to school having had non-mainstream experiences (Stahl & Miller, 1989).

Second, the theory assumes that language acquisition occurs when learners test hypotheses about the meaning of the environment, based on previous experience. Yet the theory lacks specificity in describing how learning actually occurs (Gunderson, 1997; Raphael & Hiebert, 1996).

The third limitation is that this theory underemphasizes the role of the teacher (Gunderson, 1997). If learning occurs naturally through the child acting upon the world, then the teacher's role becomes secondary to that of the environment itself. While this perspective may recognize that the teacher is critical in enriching or structuring the environment, it is difficult to infer exactly what should be done instructionally (Gunderson, 1997; Raphael & Hiebert, 1996).

In summary, both the phonics and whole language models are partial responses to the challenges stemming from an increasingly diverse society (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). "None of these models provides the theoretical underpinnings that compel educators to either place curriculum in sociohistorical perspective, or align the literacy practices valued in school with those practiced in the homes of its students" (O'Flahavan & Seidl, 1997, p. 215).

Reconciling Phonics and Whole Language: Some Recommendations

The sociocultural perspective of literacy and literacy development has at least three implications for reading instruction. First, reading is neither bottom-up (part-to-whole), as phonics advocates believe, nor top-down (whole-to-part), as proponents of the whole-language theory espouse. It is an interaction among reader, text, and author (Rosenblatt, 1994). Sociocultural perspective theorists view reading as a process from whole to part and from part to whole (Strickland, 1998). Both whole language and phonics approaches contribute to this process.

Second, literacy starts before school in a natural condition from birth. Most young children come to school with many literacy-related experiences that may influence, if not determine, their propensity to become engaged readers (Sonnenschein, Brody, & Munsterman, 1996). The nature and the extent of these experiences may vary, however, according to the student's social, cultural, and economical backgrounds. Therefore, reading instruction must be varied.

Third, the term "zone of proximal development" implies a distance between what the child can accomplish alone and what he or she can accomplish with the help of a more capable person. Reading can be accelerated with help from a more knowledgeable or capable person such as a sibling, parent, or teacher. Thus, instruction from a social-constructivist view is more directed than in whole language classrooms, but less directed than in phonics instruction classrooms (McCarthey & Raphael, 1992; O'Flahaven & Seidl, 1997). The goal is to achieve a balance in literacy instruction, with no expectations for a "recipe" that can be followed. Students' different sociocultural backgrounds and abilities are acknowledged and the curriculum is adjusted accordingly. The importance of families in children's literacy development is recognized, and efforts are made to involve parents in developing children's reading competence (Baker et al., 1996).

Hence, the following three steps are recommended for reconciling the whole language and phonics debate from a social constructive perspective:

1. *Examine different reading instruction models critically.* Our views of learning influence how we structure classroom environments, select instructional methods, and define teachers' roles (Stahl & Hayes, 1997). Therefore, before we use an instructional model, it is important to ask the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the model?
- What are its basic assumptions?
- What are its basic elements?
- What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- When, for whom, and under what conditions could I use the model?

2. *Respect students' backgrounds, languages, interests, and abilities.* The student population in our schools today has greater diversity in language, culture, and achievement than at any previous time in history. Teachers can expect to encounter students who speak a dialect different from their own, students who are bilingual, and even students who speak little or no English. These children represent different cultures that hold varied and different expectations for teachers and students.

To cultivate and ensure enthusiasm for literacy development, students' backgrounds, languages, interests, and abilities should be not only accepted, but also respected. By using information about the learners' cultures, values, knowledge, and interests to plan instruction, teachers can create an environment that boosts literacy learning (Freppon & Dahl, 1998).

3. *Involve parents in children's literacy learning.* Vygotsky (1986) holds that knowledge and understanding are socially constructed, influenced by the social, historical, and cultural contexts of the participants as they interact. Fitzgerald and Goncu (1993) used the Vygotskian construct of intersubjectivity, or shared understanding, to argue that parents and educators must jointly construct a shared understanding about what children should learn and how they should learn it. We believe that such intersubjectivity is critical to the success of efforts to promote literacy through the following home-school connection practices suggested by Baker et al. (1996):

- Tell me about your child
- Home reading journals
- Family stories
- Family meetings

In "Tell me about your child," parents are invited to write about their child. In "Home reading journals," children are encouraged to choose books from the classroom library to take home with them each night to read, be read to, or share. In "Family stories," children are urged to bring their home lives to school during storytelling time every day as they write and share stories with each other. Baker et al. (1996) invited families to attend evening meetings to enhance the family-school connection in children's literacy development, and in order to learn from the parents what they thought was important about literacy and schooling,

Although this model appears to be optimal for connecting school and home (Baker et al., 1996), it is by no means the only one. We suggest that reading teachers should continue to explore ways to involve families fully in developing engaged readers at school and at home.

Conclusion

Reading is a complex process, and so is reading instruction research. Different views of education philosophy, education psychology, and literacy development theory may result in different teaching models, such as phonics and whole language. From the social constructive perspective, all reading instruction models, whether phonics or whole language, are points on a continuum. Each has its own place in reading instruction and each has its limitations.

From our perspective, key instructional decisions do not hinge on which of the available instructional approaches is "best." The important concern relates to the relevancy of a particular approach, given the instructional situation.

The debate of whether reading is best taught through whole language or phonics will rage on for the foreseeable future. Marie Carbo (1996) states that the presence of different cultural learning styles means that some children learn to read easily with phonics, and some do not. The same can be said of whole language programs. Therefore, reading teachers who have students as diverse as the ones described at the beginning of the chapter need to make informed instructional decisions by critically examining different reading instruction models, respecting their students' unique sociocultural backgrounds, and involving parents in their students' literacy development. In short, teachers could and should reconcile whole language and phonics approaches in their classroom within a sociocultural literacy perspective.

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CHAPTER 9—BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Preserving a Child's First Language While Promoting Facility With a Second Language

Elise Jepson Green

In an urban kindergarten classroom in western Pennsylvania, Mrs. Smith teaches 50 children who are proficient in 11 different languages. Mrs. Smith, who speaks only English, wonders how to provide high-quality literacy and learning experiences for all her students.

There are more than 65 tribes in the Republic of Kenya, each having a unique culture and language. Although Kiswahili is the national language, the Kenyan education system preserves children's first languages while promoting facility with a second (Kiswahili) and a third language (English). As Inspector of Schools for the government of Kenya, responsible for more than 30 elementary schools in his linguistically and culturally diverse territory, Moses Mutuku needs to know how to best preserve children's first languages while promoting facility with a second and third.

Mr. Ortega is an ESL teacher in a transitional bilingual 1st-grade class in rural New Jersey. His school district serves a large migrant farmworking population. The children's primary and home language is Spanish. He is concerned that many Spanish-speaking students are being moved too quickly from bilingual ESL programs to English-only ESL programs. He wants to know the optimum amount of primary language support his second language learners should have before making the transition into a program that exclusively uses the second language.

This chapter offers a glimpse into the complexity and controversy surrounding the education of second language learners. In an era of mass media, the chance for the proliferation of misinformation is increased. These mainstream forces inevitably shape language attitudes and policies, regardless of their merit. The term "bilingual" means different things to different people. Although each of the above programs is labeled "bilingual," they differ dramatically in the ways in which the learners' first and second languages are used for instructional purposes. One common component of these programs is that they serve children who are proficient in languages that are different from the mainstream, instructional language of the school. The programs also share the goal of developing students' academic proficiency in the mainstream language. The solution to these teachers' questions is best achieved by first identifying the curricular and instructional features of their specific bilingual education programs, rather than assuming similarities based on labels.

What Constitutes Bilingual Education?

Bilingual education programs exist in a variety of different forms and contexts throughout the world. The term "bilingual education" refers to any education approach that leads to some degree of proficiency in two or more languages (Milk, 1993). Children enrolled in bilingual education programs are typically in the beginning stages of bilingual development (Hakuta, 1990). For this reason, the most important feature of a bilingual education program is the use of the first language as the instructional medium (Krashen, 1991).

Lambert (1975) was the first to theorize about additive and subtractive bilingualism. These two "bilingual" education processes (or outcomes) are defined by their pedagogical and philosophical orientation. When a second language is added to the first, or native, language, the outcome is "additive bilingualism." Learners who are "additive bilinguals" have attained high levels of language development in both the native (L1) and the second (L2) languages (Cummins, 1979).

Paco attends the dual language Key School/La Escuela Key in Arlington, Virginia, and is an example of an additive bilingual. He entered kindergarten four years ago proficient in Spanish and is now proficient in both Spanish (his first language) and English (his second language). His mother is able to communicate in both Spanish (her first language) and English (her second language), but she is more confident and competent expressing herself in Spanish. Her bilingualism is described as "Spanish-dominant."

When a bilingual education process replaces a first language with a second language, the outcome is "subtractive bilingualism." Marta is fluent in Spanish and is enrolled in a "bilingual" kindergarten program. The program, as well as the school district, advocates English-only for all instruction and language used within academic settings. Faculty, staff, and children, regardless of their English language proficiencies, are discouraged from using languages other than English while in school. Hence, the outcome is subtractive bilingualism, since Marta will eventually replace Spanish with English. Subtractive bilingual policies were customary in the 1930s and 1940s. Stories detail Spanish-speaking and Native American-speaking children who quickly learned the meaning of the English word "soap" because their mouths were washed with soap as punishment for using their native language (Crawford, 1991).

A program that aims to develop students who function well in two languages must maintain and enrich the first language while developing proficiency and literacy in the second. If Marta had been encouraged to keep using and developing her Spanish proficiency while learning English, her first language could have been preserved. Maintenance programs, also known as late-exit and developmental bilingual programs, usually serve language "minority" students, while enrichment programs include language "minority" and "majority" students. Enrichment programs make bilingualism and biliteracy the goals for all students, regardless of their linguistic background (Crawford, 1998).

Enrichment immersion and two-way, or dual-language, immersion are other additive bilingual education models. Enrichment immersion is somewhat elitist, in that the biliteracy and bilingualism goal relates specifically to language majority students. An example of an enrichment immersion program would be a French language (L2) magnet school for students who are speakers of English (L1).

Transitional and English immersion bilingual education program models both have outcomes of subtractive bilingualism. The goal of a transitional bilingual education (TBE) program, also known as early-exit bilingual education, is proficiency in English (or a second language) in order to expedite participation in the "mainstream" (Lessow-Hurley, 1996).

What Are the Issues in Bilingual Education?

Bilingual education is as much a pedagogical issue as it is a political one. The debate over bilingual/ESL education often is reduced to viewing the education of second language learners as a separate curriculum taught by specialists. Educators tend to focus exclusively on teaching English (L2) as quickly as possible, with little consideration given to the content area knowledge and academic skills that their mainstream counterparts are learning (Stanford Working Group, 1993). Marta is a victim of this unidimensional perspective of second language learners, which fails to consider or value the knowledge possessed by linguistically and culturally different children (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Opposition to bilingual education is related to our need for expedient results, issues of hegemony, and the persistence of misconceptions and misinformation concerning its implementation (Davis & Golden, 1994). The primary focus of bilingual education should be for students to master curricular content rather than to develop language proficiency (Met, 1994).

Programs that are designed to serve the needs of students who are proficient in languages other than English are often labeled "bilingual" or "ESL," although their instruction may be concentrated only in English (Casanova & Arias, 1993). Much of the current debate and public sentiment in the U.S. regarding bilingual education is based on the persistent fallacy that bilingual education means that instruction is mainly in the students' native languages (Crawford, 1998). Consequently, the term "bilingual education" has become so confounded as to be pedagogically meaningless (Casanova & Arias, 1993).

Language, History, and Politics

Linguistic attitudes and policies evolve over time and are deeply rooted in and inextricably linked to historical events that often have nothing to do with language (Crawford, 1998). Language concerns heighten and lessen in response to changing political contexts. In each society, different languages are accorded different rights and privileges, based on the power wielded by the speakers (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). A strong connection exists between vernacular language and personal identity, consequently linking language to politics. Marta quickly learned that words spoken in English in her classroom were more valued and powerful than those spoken in Spanish. More people understood and responded when she spoke in English; therefore, her motivation to learn and communicate in English increased. Isolation and frustration can be strong motivators for switching to the majority language.

The primary, and often only, goal of programs designed for second language learners is majority language proficiency (Genesee, 1994). This perspective views the second language learner as deficient (in the majority language) rather than proficient (in a language other than the majority). Marta was viewed as deficient because her Spanish language needed to be "fixed" to conform with the English majority. By only considering the child's language, this "deficit" model fails to recognize and value the social, cognitive, and academic dimensions of the second language learner. Although Marta's school functions as an agency that transmits aspects of language use, it is not an agent of intergenerational language transmission—something that is essential for the enculturation of a language (Fishman, 1996). When Marta replaces her first language with a second one, her diminished use of her mother tongue is not the only loss suffered (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). There is a critical connection between culture and language that contributes to the the devastating effect of native language loss. As Joshua Fishman (1996) so eloquently states:

> The most important relationship between language and culture that gets to the heart of what is lost when you lose a language is that most of the culture is in the language and is expressed in the language. Take it away from the culture, and you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, and its prayers. The culture could not be expressed and handed on in any other way. What would be left? When you are talking about the language, most of what you are talking about is the culture. That is, you are losing all those things that essentially are the way of life, the way of thought, the way of valuing, and the human reality that you are talking about. (paragraph 6).

There is also a more personal side to the significance of a native language. Feelings of family, kinship, and community are interwoven into individuals' attitudes about their native languages, which have shaped their identities since birth. This positive ethnolinguistic consciousness enhances a shared sense of belonging and community membership that is the essential spirit of the language (Fishman, 1996).

Program Labels and Practices

Simplistic labels, such as "bilingual" and "immersion," are misleading because they are not mutually exclusive. Several recent studies reveal that successful programs use both strategies extensively (Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Krashen (1991) indicated that some studies compared bilingual program labels, rather than program pedagogies. Without observing actual classroom practices, this practice can lead researchers to make dangerous assumptions (Krashen, 1991). One study found that classroom observations of actual programs revealed practices that often contradicted the program labels. Considerable variation existed in the qualitative differences between similarly labeled bilingual and ESL programs in how first and subsequent languages were integrated both into the curriculum and into the social context of the school (Hopstock & Bucaro, 1993).

Many bilingual education decisions made by administrators, educators, and policymakers, as well as opinions held by the general population, are based on misinformation. Unfortunately, their conclusions concerning the effectiveness of bilingual education often are drawn from questionable evaluations of bilingual and ESL programs and, therefore, are erroneous. According to Willig and Ramirez (1993), two basic "pseudo-evaluation" strategies are used to determine program evaluation questions. One questionable strategy includes surveys of achievement data from the general population of language minority students, and the other refers to surveys of achievement data from students who are in programs labeled as bilingual.

The problem is that many bilingual/ESL programs have similar labels, yet they differ in how they define and implement their bilingual programs (Willig & Ramirez, 1993). Thomas and Collier (1997) advise educators to focus on the characteristics of a bilingual/ESL program, rather than on its name or label. In addition, programs with the bilingual education label seldom use two languages of instruction in equal proportion across the school day (Crawford, 1991). This discrepancy between program labels and the salient program features adds to the confusion and misinformation.

Limitations of Research on Bilingual Education

Persistent myths and misconceptions about bilingual education have skewed research on its effectiveness so that the focus has shifted from creating equal education opportunities to touting politically motivated agendas (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Few researchers use operational definitions for the programs under their investigation, which presents concerns in formal research and evaluation studies of bilingual education (Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991). The accuracy of, and ability to generalize, research findings also depend on adequate documentation of the program characteristics and instructional variables (Cazden, 1992). Program characteristics must include, at the very least, the amount (percent) and duration (years) that each language in a program is used and the contextual factors of the language use, reported for each academic subject (Willig & Ramirez, 1993). Classroom size, characteristics of student population, grouping strategies, and degree of active learning activities are but a few of the instructional characteristics that need to be included in the description of a program under evaluation. By understanding how research methodology directly affects the reliability and interpretation of a study's results, it becomes clear how evaluations of bilingual education have led to misinterpretations and false conclusions (Willig, 1985).

Recent research findings have failed to address the concerns that are most important to practitioners, program coordinators, and administrators. Even when studies are well-designed and technically accurate, they ask the wrong questions. Teachers and administrators need to know the strategies and program characteristics that are most effective in contributing to long-term positive outcomes for second language learners. Rather than asking "which program is better," the investigator should be exploring the "sets of instructional practices [that] allow identified groups of English learners to reach eventual parity across the curriculum with the local or

Table 1
Limitations of Typical Program Evaluations

Limitations of Program Evaluations

- Short-term focus
- High rates of mobility in second language student population
- High variation in program implementation:
  - from classroom to classroom
  - from school to school
- Pretest scores in short-term evaluations underestimate second language learners' abilities
- Second language learners are unable to demonstrate true knowledge, due to initial language barrier in acquired language

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national group of native speakers of English, irrespective of the students' origin" (Thomas & Collier, 1997, p. 19).

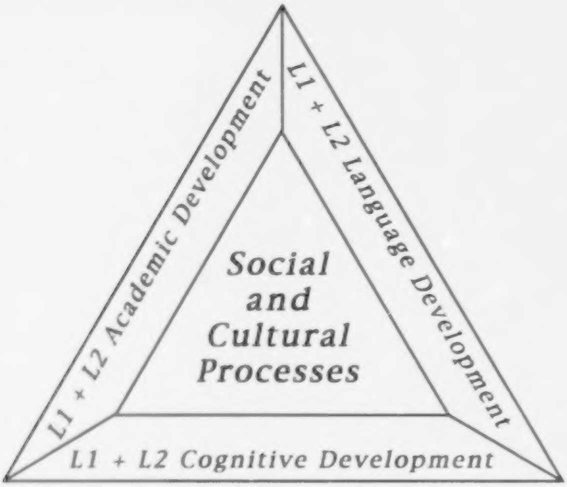
School administrators and policymakers should use a critical eye when reviewing data from typical program evaluations. Thomas and Collier (1997) identified the limitations of typical program evaluations, which are represented in Table 1.

Characteristics of Effective Bilingual Education Programs

The most current and comprehensive information regarding school effectiveness issues for second language learners is found in the Thomas and Collier research series (1982-1996). Based on the results of these ongoing, longitudinal studies, Thomas and Collier (1997) developed a conceptual model to help educators and policymakers understand the complex process of second language acquisition within a school context. The Prism Model represents the interrelationships and multifaceted nature of the developmental process that occurs for bilingual children during the school years (see Figure 1). This model is particularly helpful in demonstrating the critical interdependence of four specific processes in second language acquisition through an integrated school curriculum (Collier, 1995). These four major components—sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes—are interdependent, complex, and the impetus behind the language acquisition process and literacy development (Collier, 1995; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

The Thomas and Collier research series (1982-1996) identified school program and instructional variables that positively influenced the long-term academic achievement of second language learners. Table 2 lists the characteristics and features shared by effective bilingual education programs (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Figure 1
Language Acquisition for School


L1 + L2 Academic Development
L1 + L2 Language Development
Social and Cultural Processes
L1 + L2 Cognitive Development

The Prism Model

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Implications and Recommendations for Bilingual Education

Educators and administrators who work with second language learners can use the following recommendations to preserve a child's first language while enhancing facility with a second language:

- *Examine current beliefs and practices in the acquisition of literacy and biliteracy.* Observe exemplary bilingual programs to see effective characteristics in action.
- *Provide holistic literacy instruction that allows children to simultaneously draw from, use, and strengthen their various literacy skills* (Gutierrez, 1993). Ensure uninterrupted cognitive, academic, and linguistic development for second language learners.
- *Develop a strong theoretical knowledge base of bilingual education.* Transform current ESL programs by integrating the emerging knowledge base of the field into effective instructional and assessment practices. Exercise caution when making long-term, school-based curricular decisions using information gathered from short-term program evaluations (Thomas & Collier, 1997).
- *Create a comfortable, quiet, and easily accessible library with a rich supply of interesting reading materials.* Allow children ample opportunities for self-selection of books and free time for voluntary reading every day, without testing them on what they have read (Krashen, 1998).

Table 2
Characteristics of Effective Bilingual Education Programs

Program variables	*Effective characteristics*
L1 instruction	•strong, long-term commitment to academic development in L1, along with L2 development •long-term grade-level work in L1 •develops L1 at age-appropriate levels •emphasizes academic enrichment, not remediation •cognitively challenging and developmentally appropriate in L1 •challenges students academically across the curriculum
L2 instruction	•L2 taught through cognitively complex academic work across the curriculum •academic work is made meaningful for students at their proficiency level in L2 •focus is on academic content, rather than on learning L2 •student achievement is enhanced when academic content is emphasized over learning L2
Current approaches	•use of very interactive styles •facilitate discovery learning across the curriculum •teachers demonstrate interest, knowledge, and skills in current approaches to teaching •include cooperative learning, process writing, performance and portfolio assessment, critical thinking, cross-age tutoring, thematic lessons, multiple intelligences, learning strategies, global perspectives
Sociocultural support	•bilingual/ESL staff feel very positive about the school environment •strong administrative and teaching staff support and interest in intercultural knowledge building •L2 learners are respected and valued for the language and culture they bring to the classroom •teachers consider the bicultural experience of L2 learners as a knowledge base to build upon •L1 enrichment and language learning opportunities are open for L2 proficient speakers to join and participate in an integrated school context
Integration with the mainstream	•well-trained bilingual/ESL school staff •carefully planned and implemented bilingual/ESL programs •access to meaningful interaction with native L2 speaking peers in a supportive environment •cooperative learning encourages interactive negotiation of meaning and the equal sharing of academic tasks •provides appropriate L2 language models

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- *Challenge students toward cognitive complexity* (Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, 1997). Maintain high expectations for second language learners in an academically challenging environment that promotes success for all students. Realize that although second language learners may be limited in their standard English proficiency, they are not limited in their ability to learn. Provide cognitively complex school tasks that not only are appropriate for the age of the second language learners, but also are in their native language (Thomas & Collier, 1997).
- *Integrate second language learning and content instruction.* Develop systematic plans for providing instructional strategies that are carefully selected, so that the students use and learn targeted aspects of language. Emphasize comprehension in the second language, rather than decoding.
- *Devise numerous ways to draw on the linguistic resources of students, families, and members of the community.* Use cross-age tutoring and reading buddy programs to provide children with appropriate bilingual language models. Encourage adult community members to work or volunteer in the school for additional bilingual support.
- *Use students' language skills and prior knowledge as a foundation for planning and implementing culturally meaningful literacy experiences.* Provide a print-rich environment that includes the languages of second language students. Invite children to bring their favorite books from home to share with classmates. Purchase several cassette player/recorders and blank tapes for children to use in the classroom or in their homes. Ask parents to make recordings of books that children bring from home.
- *Create a socioculturally supportive school environment.* Help children learn the social behaviors and cultural values associated with the school language, as well as how to negotiate between values and behaviors learned from home and from those in the school (Genesee & Nicoladis, 1995). Provide second language learners with a firm grounding in their primary language literacy for long-term successful achievement. Establish an additive bilingual, whole-school context to enhance school achievement (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Minimize the social pressures for linguistic assimilation by confirming the importance of linguistic diversity and promoting the maintenance of native languages and cultural resources (Milk, 1993). Involve parents and families in education programs to provide natural opportunities for guiding, modeling, and nurturing positive racial, ethnic, and cultural attitudes and perspectives (Green, 1997; Swick, Boutte, & van Scoy, 1995)
- *Develop and use active teaching behaviors.* Encourage activity-centered classes that offer regular and extended discussion opportunities, which benefit all language learners (Cummins, 1994; Fern, Anstrom, & Silcox, 1997). Teach cognitively complex content through the use of active teaching strategies, such as whole language, cooperative learning, interactive and discovery learning, and instructional conversations (Tharpe & Gallimore, 1991).
- *Use classroom-based assessments.* Use an assessment process that integrates language proficiency (L1 and L2) and content as part of the instructional process. View the second language learner as a whole child, rather than as a set of language skills

(Genessee & Hamayan, 1994). Enhance knowledge and skills by using observations, conferences, journals, portfolios, checklists, and narrative records. Include children in the instruction and assessment process by providing clear instructions, offering strong, supportive feedback, and sharing responsibility for student learning. Document examples of bilingual children's literacy development, in both languages, in their portfolio (McLaughlin, Blanchard, & Osanai, 1995).

- *Create a family-centered learning environment.* Ensure that parents feel welcome, supported, and included in the education process; this will encourage parents' active involvement in the education of their children. Create partnerships between teachers and parents to facilitate the meaningful exchange of information between home and school. Establish a liberal lending policy that encourages children to check out classroom literacy resources to enjoy at home.

Conclusion

Classroom teachers like Mrs. Smith face increasing challenges as they strive to provide high-quality learning experiences in mainstream classrooms for students proficient in many different languages. Educators in this position should begin by focusing on creating a family-centered program. Reach out to families and make a personal connection between you and your students' parents. Consider having a summer open house in your school and making home visits to hand deliver invitations to parents. Plan family events throughout the year to promote and validate the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity. The parents will feel welcome and be more likely to take an active role in your program. The key to the success of linguistically diverse programs depends heavily on parents and community members serving as language models and assisting in the creation of literacy resources.

Mr. Mutuku, the Kenyan Inspector of Schools, benefits from learning the theories and knowledge base that informs current practices in bilingual education. The first step he takes is to ensure that schools adopt and practice whole-school additive bilingualism. To promote the maintenance of its language and cultural resources, Mr. Mutuku strives to achieve staffing patterns in each school that reflect the linguistic character of its students and community. He believes that his staff and community volunteers would benefit from professional training in the development and use of active teaching strategies, classroom-based assessment, and the integration of second language learning and content instruction.

The concern raised by Mr. Ortega about the optimum duration and timing of transitional bilingual education programs can be answered by understanding the developmental process of learning a language. Transitional bilingual education programs move second language learners from dual-language to English-only instruction before children have become proficient in the target language. While many of these students appear conversationally fluent in English, they have not developed enough proficiency in the second language to function successfully in academic situations. It takes an extensive length of time (between 4 and 12 years) of second language development for the most advantaged students to reach academic proficiency sufficient to compete successfully with native speakers (Collier, 1989, 1995; Cummins, 1991, 1994). Due to the complex variables influencing the development of language, a long-term focus and commitment to the acquisition of the second language is crucial for sustained and long-term academic success in the second language.

The preservation of a child's first language, while promoting facility with a second, is enhanced when educators and program administrators understand and recognize the similarities between becoming literate in a first and in a second language (Hudelson, 1994). A long-term focus and commitment to the acquisition of the second language allows second language learners to attain the deep academic proficiency necessary for success in school and work (Collier, 1989, 1995; Cummins, 1991, 1994; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

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Resources

Spanish Language Resources

El Centro Para el Estudio de Libros Infantiles y Juveniles en Espanol
    http://www.oeri.ed.gov/Family/RWN/Actividades/libros.html
Biblioteca Publica de Los Angeles - Lectura Recomendada
    http://www.lapl.org/admin/kidsweb/spanish/rr-e.html
NCBE y el Departamento de Eduacion: Recursos en Espanol
    http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/library/espanol.htm

On-line Resources

CABE (California Association of Bilingual Education)
    http://www.bilingualeducation.org/Frame1.htm
CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services: Early Childhood Research Institute)
    http://clas.uiuc.edu
CMMR (Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research)
    http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~cmmr/BEResources.html
LMRI (Linguistic Minority Research Institute: The University of California)
    http://lmrinet.gse.ucsb.edu/
NCBE's (National Center for Bilingual Education) On-line Library
    http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/library.index.htm
TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) On-line
    http://www.tesol.edu/index2.html

CHAPTER 10—GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Individual Differences or One-Size-Fits-All?

Jennifer V. Rotigel

A kindergarten child, returning home on the third day of school, tearfully announces to his mother that he can never go to school again. After much coaxing, this highly gifted child sobs, "I'm the dumbest kid in the room. No one else thinks like I do, and I always have a different answer than the one that the teacher wants."

During a parent-teacher conference, a 3rd-grade teacher reports that a gifted student in her class seldom contributes to class discussions. The student explains, "I don't want all the kids to know that I know all the answers. I help the teacher out when no one else knows the answers. I'm running silent."

A 5th-grader confides, "I'm working on a special essay that compares Clive Cussler's early novels (written in the 1970s) to those written in the early 1990s. I want to show how political and social changes in our country are reflected in Cussler's writing, as well as how he has matured as an author. But I can't work on it in school because my teacher wants me to read Black Beauty."

These true stories illustrate some of the concerns, frustrations, and misunderstandings encountered by gifted children whose needs are not properly understood or met in schools. All children should have the opportunity to learn and make progress in school; indeed, most schools make that commitment to their students. Modification of the curriculum, however, often is needed to provide gifted students with meaningful educational experiences and help them feel the success of completing work that is authentically challenging. While educators advocate curriculum modification in order to help those less able to learn, many fail to follow that precedent in order to provide for gifted students. This chapter will explore recent research and describe current programming and teaching techniques that have proven to be successful in educating gifted children.

What Does It Mean To Be Gifted?

There are many different conceptions and definitions of giftedness. The popularity of any particular perspective on giftedness is influenced by the political and social climate of the time, and by developing understandings of the mind and how it functions. There is little agreement about the characteristics of gifted children—how they learn, how they are motivated, and how best to educate them.

Legal Definitions

In 1972, the commissioned report "Education of the Gifted and Talented" (Marland, 1972, p. 2) provided a definition of these children that was adopted by the U.S. Office of Education. This definition (Public Law 91-230, Section 806) states:

> Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons, who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contributions to self and society.
>
> Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:
>
> 1. General intellectual ability
> 2. Specific academic aptitude
> 3. Creative or productive thinking
> 4. Leadership ability
> 5. Visual and performing arts
> 6. Psychomotor ability (note: this was later removed from the definition)

"National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent," a 1993 U.S. Department of Education report, updated the Marland Report definition. Based on the definition used in the federal Javits Gifted and Talented Education Act, the definition in this important report reflects current thinking in the field:

> Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.
>
> These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools.
>
> Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. (U.S. Department of Education, 1993, p. 3)

In the United States, the responsibility for identifying gifted children rests with the states; the federal definition provides a model that many states have followed. This type of definition expands the concept of talent and giftedness beyond a single IQ score, and describes a need for differentiated educational programs.

Definitions of General Intelligence

Definitions based on the idea of general intelligence, or a "g" factor, are supported by tests such as the Stanford-Binet Fourth Edition and the Weschler III. These individually administered standardized tests are two of the most commonly used measures of general intelligence. Schools that use an IQ score as part of their gifted identification process often require a full-scale score of 130, which represents the top 2 percent of those who have taken these tests.

Critics of such intelligence measures cite racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic bias in the tests. While efforts have been made to correct for these factors, most schools use multiple criteria (such as teacher recommendations, grades, and achievement test results) to provide a better overall picture of a child's abilities and achievement.

Inclusive Definitions

The theory of multiple intelligences, as described by Howard Gardner (1983), provides a much more inclusive definition of intelligence and, therefore, giftedness. Ramos-Ford and Gardner (1997) define intelligence as an "ability or set of abilities that permit an individual to solve problems or fashion products" (p. 55). The multiple intelligences approach identifies many more children as gifted than the more traditional methods.

Similarly, Renzulli and Reis (1997) suggest that we should describe children as demonstrating "gifted behaviors" rather than as "being gifted." Believing that a restrictive definition based upon an IQ score is too limiting, the authors cite Torrance's (1962, 1974) work as a rationale for identifying a "talent pool" of students, constituting approximately 15-20 percent of the population, who should receive enrichment opportunities. In this way, Renzulli and Reis expect to avoid excluding underachieving students who need to receive opportunities that are outside of the regular school curriculum.

For the purposes of this chapter, it is perhaps most important to consider those children who are described by the U.S. Office of Education as students who "require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society" (Assouline, 1997, p. 91). These children may show exceptional ability within one or more specific talent areas. The key criterion, however, is that their education needs are not being met within the regular school program; they need to have specially designed instruction or an individualized program of schooling. Because of the possible stigma associated with the term "gifted," some educators advocate calling these students "academically talented" and providing "talent development" for them.

The classroom teacher has an essential role to play in the identification of gifted students. Unfortunately, research shows that classroom teachers are often poor judges of giftedness (Bell & Roach, 1986; Dowdall & Colangelo, 1982). This may be due in part to inadequate preservice and inservice training regarding gifted students. Because the gifted population is small and so many myths and misunderstandings surround the nature of giftedness, this is a serious concern. When asked to identify gifted students, most teachers single out children who are high achievers in traditional subject areas and whose learning/teaching style matches that of the teacher. Not all gifted students are high achievers, however, nor are their areas of giftedness restricted to the "3 Rs." For example, the teacher of the 3rd-grade child who didn't want everyone to know that he knew all the answers would need to look for indications of ability other than class participation.

Tobin (1996), in her essay "Is It a Cheetah?," asks, "If a cheetah is not running at its top speed of 70 miles per hour, is it still a cheetah?" Similarly, if a gifted child is not outperforming peers on every test, is he or she still gifted? If the work is too easy, gifted children may not do their best. After all, if a child has been reading chapter books at home, how much desire will she have to read pre-primers at school?

What Kind of Program Is Best?

After identification, the question becomes, "Now what?" It makes no sense to label children as gifted and yet make no changes in their education programs. Although assessment should lead to a beneficial outcome for the child (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1987), children often are placed in the school's "gifted program" with no consideration as to whether or not that program will meet a particular child's needs. Gifted children are individuals, and they vary considerably from one another. Thus, the "one-size-fits-all" approach to programming often fits no one.

Many educators struggle with the choice of whether to provide enrichment or acceleration for gifted students. Both enrichment and acceleration should be available and adapted to each child's needs. Some schools attempt to settle this problem by providing enrichment in the elementary grades and acceleration in the secondary schools. This practice stems from a misunderstanding of the true nature of acceleration and from an effort to provide "something" for gifted students. The more important issues to consider are each child's individual differences and how the curriculum may best be modified to meet identified educational needs.

Acceleration

Boatman, Davis, and Benbow (1995) note that "the goal of acceleration is curricular flexibility without regard to age" (p. 1085). Most curricula are written for the "average" student. Gifted children's abilities and interests may differ significantly from the average, however, so careful assessment of their current levels must be conducted in order to determine which parts of the curriculum match and which need to be modified. In this context, acceleration is simply placing the academically talented child at the proper place in a school's curriculum. Educators commonly make curricular adaptations for students who have special needs, yet we seem to believe that we are conferring special privilege if we modify the curriculum for a gifted child. Proper placement (acceleration) is not at all the same as pushing a child "ahead" of the others, as is commonly believed. Instead, it allows children who are academically talented to learn and benefit from their schooling.

Enrichment

Enrichment programs often are provided at the elementary school level, and may consist of activities to develop creativity, thinking skills, flexibility, or research skills. Such programs are frequently "pull-out" ones, which means that the children are pulled out of their regular classroom to meet with other gifted children for a few hours each week. Opponents of pull-out enrichment programs sometimes call them elitist, believing that students not classified as gifted could benefit from such programs, as well. There is more than meets the eye, however, in terms of enrichment programs. When the class of gifted students goes to see a ballet, for example, few people know of the extensive research, discussion, and in-depth analysis that the students do in preparation for the field trip. Enrichment programs should be challenging and promote a deeper understanding of the subject than is appropriate or possible for the children who are not included. In this way, enrichment can go beyond the regular curriculum and meet gifted children's identified needs.

Individual Differences

A kindergarten teacher once told me, "In the beginning of the year, my students have such a wide range of achievement levels. My job is to make sure that they are all at the same place when I pass them on to the 1st-grade teacher." Such efforts to achieve homogeneity are seriously flawed when viewed from the perspective of children with special needs, including the gifted. According to recent studies, students who are academically talented have already mastered from 35 to 50 percent of the upcoming year's planned curriculum for their chronological grade level (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). If the teacher is primarily concerned with making all the children the same, this bodes poorly for the learning of any child, particularly gifted ones. Because gifted children differ significantly from the norm in both their rate of learning and their rate of retention, attempts to make such children conform to the norm will seriously retard their intellectual growth and learning. In addition, gifted children are not only different from the norm, they are very different from each other in terms of achievement levels, pace of learning, rate of retention, and motivation.

Although the 5th-grade student with an interest in Clive Cussler's writing described in the opening vignette is obviously verbally talented, he may or may not demonstrate outstanding abilities in other areas of his schooling. Even if the regular language arts curriculum is not meeting the child's needs, therefore, it is possible that the regular mathematics or social studies curriculum is appropriate. Educators need to provide flexible options, rather than a single track of programming in which all children are expected to participate.

Implications/Recommendations

An individualized approach to educating gifted students can be accomplished when proper attention is given to assessment of each child's needs, and the identified needs are then addressed in a systematic fashion. In addition, school personnel must have a deep understanding of these students' social and emotional needs. Research has shown that gifted students are as well, or better, adjusted than the norm. This does not mean, however, that any particular child is without specific social or emotional needs. Giftedness brings with it some concerns, and the feelings expressed by the kindergarten child mentioned in the first vignette is perhaps more common than not.

It is particularly important that children who are gifted not feel isolated, different, or unable to "fit in." Yet, if gifted individuals are not grouped, at least sometimes, with intellectual peers, it is easy for them to feel alone and different. Such ability grouping has come under attack recently and has been replaced by heterogeneous grouping in many schools for reasons of equity and socialization. Unfortunately, in the specific case of educating gifted children, this trend is counter to a very large body of research (e.g., Alan, 1991; Feldhusen, 1989; Kulik, 1992; Kulik & Kulik, 1987; Rogers, 1991, 1993; Van Tassel-Baska, 1992). Research on gifted students with regard to grouping indicates that gifted children make their best progress when homogeneously grouped by ability, and when the curriculum and pace are modified to match the group.

Simply placing gifted students together in a room and then giving them what they would have had in a mixed ability class defeats the purpose of ability grouping. The benefits of ability grouping are marked when the curriculum is differentiated according to student readiness (Rogers, 1993). The analogy of a football team is applicable here; it is common practice to seek opponents who have high athletic talents for the team to practice against so that they can meet new levels of challenge. Children who are academically talented need to sharpen their skills in the company of other students who can provide stimulating discussions and help them keep pace with challenging work. In addition, rewarding students with good grades for doing work that is not challenging does not enhance self-esteem. Gifted children need to feel the satisfaction of doing a good job on a task that is intellectually difficult.

Research indicates that teachers in the regular classroom make only minor modifications to the curriculum for gifted children (Archambault et al., 1993). The current emphasis on including children with special needs in the regular classroom, however, means that a great deal of teacher preservice and inservice training is focused on differentiation of instruction. This training will help teachers to meet the needs of academically talented students, as well.

In addition to diagnostic and prescriptive teaching techniques and an individualized approach, teachers can compact the curriculum in the regular class to allow gifted students to progress at a faster pace (Winebrenner, 1992). Compacting the curriculum may be conceptualized as a four-step process. First, students are pretested on the concepts and skills to be learned in the upcoming chapter or unit. Next, results are analyzed to determine which portions have been mastered. Third, as the chapter or unit progresses, the student works with the class on the concepts and skills that have not been mastered. When the class works on items that the student has mastered, the student may use the time for acceleration and/or enrichment, as appropriate. Finally, post testing is done along with the regular class.

Conclusion

In my work with gifted students, I see many examples of "mismatches" between students and their programs of study. In these cases, students are sometimes bored with work that is too easy or repetitive, or they are frustrated with work that they do not understand, yet are expected to teach themselves. Sometimes, students even become disenchanted with a subject that previously had given them much pleasure. I find that most teachers are ill-prepared to teach diagnostically, and many harbor misconceptions of giftedness that limit their ability to reach and teach all students. Also, the time necessary to plan and implement individualized instructional programs places a heavy burden on teachers who are already overwhelmed with administrative paperwork, and by classrooms full of children with widely diverse abilities and needs.

One 1st-grade teacher I know was preparing to share a picture book with her class. As she stood before the group, 6-year-old Jadran commented, "I see you are going to read *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* to us." "Oh," the teacher replied, "Do you have this book at home?" "No," Jadran said, "I just read the title off the cover." The teacher was surprised and continued to be surprised by Jadran. Not only could he read the teacher's manual, he also won the art contest for the entire elementary school. Just as Jadran's teacher could not ignore his abilities, schools cannot overlook the obligation to provide for these abilities.

It is the schools' responsibility to provide appropriate education to gifted students, no less than it is to provide for the education of children who differ from the norm in other ways. It is not elitist to allow access to advanced curricular topics for which the child is ready. It is, however, wrong and harmful to deny the ability of these children and force them to conform to a pace that is too slow, perform unnecessary multiple repetitions of an exercise, and waste time repeating material that they already have mastered.

When our schools begin to show a true interest in academic success, perhaps gifted children will be more comfortable with their abilities and not feel as embarrassed as the 3rd-grade child in the chapter's introduction. Children who excel in school sports certainly do not try to hide their ability in order to earn the acceptance of peers. Our schools need to view the education of gifted children as an opportunity to meet their needs. Meeting their education needs does not have to be done at the expense of other students. Children who are academically talented do not need to have better programs than everyone else does, but they do require programs that are different.

> "No bird soars too high who flies with his own wings."
>
> —Marva Collins

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CHAPTER 11—PROGRAM EVALUATION

Monitoring Quality Without Sacrificing Substance

Mary Renck Jalongo and Moses M. Mutuku

A doctoral student and public school administrator decides to conduct a study of his district's long-standing practice of providing another year of school between kindergarten and 1st grade, a "transitional 1st grade." He begins the study confident that the children and families who experienced the program will see it as the educators do—as an intervention designed to be helpful. After he interviews children who were former students in transition classes and their parents, however, he is surprised to discover that they felt stigmatized by the program and saw it as a sign of academic failure. These findings call into question whether the program had made the contribution that its founders had intended and assumed for the past 20 years.

The state of Pennsylvania allocated over $13 million in incentive money to support schools that could demonstrate increases in children's test scores. Shortly thereafter, both the city of Philadelphia schools and a group of rural schools filed suit, arguing that funding based on test score increases would leave them at a disadvantage. "If the students in our school already are performing far above average on tests, how much more can they be expected to improve?" one teacher asks. "And," she continues, "will this ultimately mean that we are disqualified from getting any incentive money because we have done so well?" Another teacher comments, "It sounds to me like this approach will disadvantage the schools and programs that need the most help. I predict that the test will get so powerful that it will drive the curriculum, just as it has in other states and nations."

Two situations in Kenya illustrate how the absence of formative evaluation data can impede progress. In the first instance, a nongovernmental organization had the money to improve the quality of life for low-income people in a drought-prone area. With the best of intentions, the organization built an elementary school. After the first students enrolled, however, drought hit the area. The community decamped and went in search of water and pasture for their livestock. Their nomadic lifestyle clearly was incompatible with resident schooling, yet those who funded the school failed to consider this possibility. Similarly, in the 1980s, Kenya launched a national curriculum. In their zeal to realize quick results, science classes were made compulsory despite the lack of labora-

tories in most schools; so were art classes. After 15 frustrating years for students, teachers, parents, and institutions, the government has finally agreed to set up a workforce to evaluate the program.

Program evaluation is a primary concern of educators throughout the world, no matter the perspective—one child's experience, the overall program's effectiveness, the consequences for a state, or the impact on a nation.

Definitions of Program Evaluation

Efforts to determine the overall effectiveness of various programs and curricula dominate the education scene. Often, the most fundamental question in evaluating a program is one of "value added"—did the program make a significant contribution that is commensurate with the investments made? Do the data justify a program's continued existence? Over the years, many different paths have been taken to arrive at answers to such questions. The answers are based on three components: assessment, evaluation, and measurement.

"Assessment" is a general term usually reserved for determinations about people. Assessment appraises program effects, one human being at a time. As such, it "involves the multiple steps of collecting data on a child's development and learning, determining its significance in light of program goals and objectives, incorporating the information into planning for individuals and programs, and communicating the findings to parents and other involved parties" (Hills, 1992, p. 43). Assessment is an understandable preoccupation of teachers, who are responsible for working with individual children. Practitioners tend to focus on a smaller scale, at the instructional level, as they strive to meet students' learning needs, make grouping decisions, prepare progress reports for students, and evaluate the instructional effectiveness of themselves or their peers (Stiggins, 1994). Because practitioners tend to look at the assessment of each child and administrators tend to think in terms of evaluation at the programmatic or policy levels, it is difficult to arrive at a meeting of the minds. A recent study concluded that teachers were

> caught in conflicts among belief systems and institutional structures, agendas, and values. The point of friction among these conflicts was assessment, which was associated with very powerful feelings of being overwhelmed, and of insecurity, guilt, frustration, and anger. . . . Assessment, as it occurs in schools, is far from a merely technical problem. Rather, it is deeply social and personal. (Johnson, Guice, & Michelson, 1995, p. 359)

"Evaluation" is another general term used in education when making judgments about things, such as lesson plans, learning experiences, curriculum models, and educational programs (Keeves, 1994). Defined in this way, evaluation is the understandable preoccupation of administrators and policymakers. Administrators tend to focus on evaluation at the level of instructional leadership and support. Large-scale evaluation in schools includes principals, curriculum coordinators, and other administrators who evaluate programs, allocate resources, and assess teachers' performance. Evaluation on an even larger scale is referred to as "policy level evaluation" (Stiggins, 1994), which occurs when agencies, states, provinces, or nations evaluate educational programs with the intention of comparing existing programs, instituting innovative programs, overhauling old programs, or discontinuing ineffective programs.

Program evaluation, as it applies specifically to education, is defined as "the sets of activities involved in collecting information about the operation and effects of policies, programs, curricula, courses, and educational software and other instructional materials" (Greddler, 1996, p. 13). Increasingly, evaluation experts are calling for new approaches to program evaluation (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Modern approaches are grounded in the Piagetian notion of constructivism, or the idea that knowledge is actively built, rather than passively received. In this view, evaluation research involves a partnership between and among professional program evaluators, decision-makers, and the stakeholders. Stakeholders include any individual or group that has a vital interest in the program and that may be affected by the evaluation results (Cousins & Earl, 1992; Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Constructivism, as it applies to evaluation, takes the position that "parents and practitioners construct their own definition of best practice after coming to know the actual practice and the context in which it operates through observation, interview, and document review" (DeStefano, Maude, & Crew, 1992, p. 74).

Given this explanation of educational program evaluation, the courses of action might appear to be fairly straightforward. On the contrary, program evaluation is one of the most political, contentious, and challenging dimensions of the education field, for it is program evaluation results that make or break careers, that determine who will get recognition and resources, and that are used to compare and rank the education achievements of entire nations.

The Source of the Controversy

Suppose that you were responsible for evaluating a program. How would you proceed? If you are inclined to break down a program into its component parts, relying on numerical data, standardized procedures, structured designs, and statistical methods of analysis, then you are operating on the assumption that an absolute truth awaits discovery through the rigorous application of the scientific method. You would be mistrustful of "soft" data, such as observations, and would instead "emphasize precision, objectivity, and reliability of measurement as well as replicability of findings" (Worthen et al., 1997, p. 520). When presenting your data, you would rely on techniques such as frequency counts, percentages, averages, statistical tables, and so forth. You would be intent on achieving utilitarian purposes, such as using test scores to identify the best schools or making a policy decision based on "hard" data.

The argument for quantitative data is that it has a tendency to be more persuasive to those who have been socialized into the values of empirical research (Lobosco & Newman, 1992). To illustrate the appeal of a quantitative-only method, consider the task confronting a state or nation that has earmarked funds to support technology as a writing tool for secondary students. There is not enough money to establish a computer writing lab in every school. So, how to choose? One group might argue that every school deserves some support, but this plan would leave no school with sufficient funds to purchase even one computer. Others would recommend an incentive program, awarding the funds to programs where the technology is already being used successfully or to those that have developed thoughtful plans for initiating such programs. Still others would contend that the technology funds should be allocated to the schools that are most in need of computers. Irrespective of which path an administrator chooses, most would prefer to do something that cannot be attributed to favoritism or capriciousness. In fact, the more official and objective-sounding the basis for the decision can be (or at least appear to be), the better. Contrary to the old adage, however, figures can and do lie. Data can be manipulated or fabricated. Even when those numbers are entirely accurate, what was counted may not matter all that much in the total scheme of things. The argument against quantitative approaches is that numbers alone do not tell the whole story, nor do they consider multiple perspectives on quality.

Perhaps you would take an entirely different approach to program evaluation. You might decide to delve into the program as a participant observer, to amass time abiding with various stakeholders and striving to get a sense of the program's multiple realities. Program evaluators who rely more on qualitative methods would tend to focus on the people in the process, using such tools as personal interviews, focus group discussions, and artifact analysis. Your findings would be constructed from the bottom up, consisting of anecdotal material, recurring themes, and displays of works. As a qualitative researcher and program evaluator, you would be gathering observational data collected in natural settings, emphasizing detailed descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated, employing multiple data-gathering methods, and using an interpretive approach to data analysis (Worthen et al., 1997). You would assume that events, or educational programs, are experienced differently by different people, thereby producing multiple realities. Your emphasis would be on the intuitive nature of program quality and the pluralistic nature of assessment. The argument for qualitative strategies is that they allow us to write the unwritable—those qualities that cannot be reduced to numbers alone (DeStefano, Maude, & Crew, 1992). The argument against qualitative strategies is that they may not provide sufficient direction or provide definitive support for the policymakers who must justify their decisions.

Consider, for example, the goal of selecting a preschool program. "Which is better," a parent of a 4-year-old might ask, "the public school pre-kindergarten, the Montessori school, the church-affiliated nursery school, the Head Start program, or keeping my child at home with me?" An appropriate answer to such an important inquiry would be, "It depends." The child's characteristics as a learner, the family's circumstances, and the particulars of each program would all need to be taken into account. Not only would it be difficult to give an unequivocal answer, but that answer would change as different families posed the same question.

This, of course, begs the question, "Why can't we be both utilitarian and intuitive?" Although most professional evaluators now regard quantitative and qualitative methods to be complementary strategies in the evaluation of educational, social, or business programs, the fact remains that utilitarian and intuitive approaches are not routinely integrated within the same evaluation design (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

At least three major impediments block enlightened program evaluation design that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data. The first barrier to high-quality program evaluation is evaluators' single-mindedness. It is rare to find a person who is equally committed to, and well-versed in, both quantitative and qualitative paradigms.

The second barrier to this new generation of program evaluation is the social context in which these studies occur. The truth is that stakeholders who seek particular types of answers pay the salaries of program evaluators. Some stakeholders will balk at charts that show gains in standardized test scores, which they see as missing the range and depth of value added by a program. Other stakeholders will protest at more intuitive and participatory approaches, which they see as failing to provide clear courses of action for decision- and policymakers.

The third barrier is uncertainty about who bears responsibility for rendering decisions about programs. Is it, or should it be, the program evaluator or those responsible for the program who makes the judgment? Some believe that the primary purpose of an evaluation report is to provide the data that will enable policymakers to arrive at informed decisions. The external evaluator, in this view, leaves it up to those who commissioned the report to decide. Others argue that any evaluation report without a value judgment from the evaluator is incomplete. While it may seem like a routine matter to feed accurate information to policymakers, Chelimsky (1995) has observed that in practice, "the decision-making environment and the evaluative process are often so far apart that nothing can bring them together" (p. 4). The following issues, stated as questions, help to explain why this might be the case.

- Who stands to benefit or lose when a program is evaluated in a particular way? Who decides what constitutes an appropriate role for the various stakeholders in the evaluation process?
- Who should conduct educational evaluations, and why? When is external review preferable? When are forms of self-study meaningful? Are there useful ways to combine internal and external evaluation?
- How will the national standards movement affect current concepts of evaluation? What can we learn from states and nations that have used standards as benchmarks for evaluating program effectiveness?
- What relationships can and should exist between program evaluation results and policymaking? Who is responsible for making the judgment call? How should such information be shared with different stakeholders? Why?
- At what point can an educational program be declared a success or failure? Who is empowered to say so? Why?

Implications/Recommendations

Contemporary realities are a "moving target," and education evaluation must be tailored to the rapidly changing needs of society (Wheatley, 1995). In reflecting on the purpose of this book, that of offering an informed perspective on education controversies, we see four characteristics of evaluation that can bring us to areas of agreement between the utilitarian and intuitive perspectives. Appropriate evaluation of educational programs is, in our view, continuous, constructivist, participatory, and appropriate.

By continuous, we mean that program evaluation is not a single, scheduled event that is imposed from the outside on a program. Rather, there are three entry points for evaluation:

- Ex ante evaluation, a feasibility study that determines the viability of the program
- Input evaluation, an examination of the resources necessary to deliver the program
- Impact evaluation, a study of the effects of the program on children and society at large (Psacharopoulos, 1995).

Traditionally, evaluation results have been used to justify funding decisions. Therefore, summative/end-of-program evaluations, rather than formative/during-the-program evaluations, have tended to dominate the field. Educational programs are sometimes implemented for using self-serving agendas without showing the anticipated impact on the target populations. Although it is common for educators to talk about "what works," the reality is that we are not sure what really works in different situations. As a result, we can only survive by making policies as we go along, tinkering and experimenting with solutions (Wheatley, 1995).

By constructivist, we mean that there are no simple, universally applicable evaluation tools that can adequately capture the dynamic quality of human learning—particularly, children's learning. Traditional forms of evaluation have applied a predetermined set of standards that were used to decide which programs were best (DeStefano, Maude, & Crew, 1992). As the landscape of education and society has evolved in response to an increasingly rapid-paced and diverse society, however, simplistic input/output methods of evaluation have proved unequal to the task. Where children's learning is concerned, there are no simple, once-and-for-all measures that will enable us to speak with authority about what is best for everyone. Just as the education field has turned to interprofessional collaboration in order to provide services to students, program evaluators now find themselves needing to form evaluation teams in order to address the challenges they confront in constructing a thorough understanding about a program's contributions.

By comprehensive, we mean that every program is multi-faceted and must be evaluated along several dimensions simultaneously. In order to realize the goal of improving educational programs, it will be necessary to consider both the external dimension (those looking in on the program from the outside) and the internal dimension (those on the inside looking out at the larger social context). Every time education evaluation fails to incorporate input from all of the relevant sources, it runs the risk of being too narrow and thus curtailing children's potential. Yet another dimension of comprehensiveness is time. As the limitations of one-shot evaluation studies become increasingly evident, evaluation experts have argued for more longitudinal evaluation. Multiple methods of research are another way to ensure comprehensiveness, while advances in technology encourage evaluators and stakeholders to reconceptualize the ways in which data are collected, analyzed, and reported.

By participatory, we mean that appraisals of program quality are not gold stars or seals of approval doled out by evaluators and pasted on an evaluation report cover. Rather, evaluation documents ought to be built on negotiation of multiple realities. Participatory evaluation regards the professional evaluator as a facilitator rather than as a comptroller, and it involves stakeholders in the evaluation process in ways that promote ownership and empowerment (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Patton, 1994). Participation must be genuine, rather than a token consultation. As such, participatory forms of program evaluation emphasize intentionality in all stakeholders, serving as a potent reminder about the many things we do as a community of people who care about education (Wheatley, 1995). Furthermore, it stands to reason that if we want teachers to make use of evaluation findings, we must involve them meaningfully throughout the evaluation process (Cousins & Earl, 1992).

Participatory evaluation would be incomplete without the input of the children. Barclay and Benelli (1996) point out that children are in a unique position to evaluate the quality of their educational programs. Children as young as 4 are capable of providing useful feedback on their experiences (Driscoll, Peterson, Browning, & Stevens, 1990), and "a program's effectiveness ultimately depends on how it is viewed by children" (Katz, 1992, p. 67). Viewed in such terms, it appears that the central question in program evaluation should be, "How does it feel to be a child in this program?" Observation and videotaping can be employed successfully by evaluators as a way of viewing the program through the eyes of the child. Ultimately, a high-quality program is one in which both children and adults find the quality of their lives together satisfying (Katz, 1992).

By appropriate, we mean that evaluation information is good only if it serves the purpose for which it is intended. Educational program evaluation data need to be geared to improving the quality of the programs for the benefit of the child. Evaluation results can and have been misused (Stevens & Dial, 1994). Three major types of inappropriate program evaluation data use may occur:

- At the beginning of an evaluation, when commissioning the study, so that a particular outcome is orchestrated at the outset
- During the evaluation process, such that positive program features are heralded while program limitations are downplayed or even deliberately concealed
- At the culmination of the evaluation study, so that only those findings that generate support from various audiences are released to those audiences.

The temptation to be self-serving in education evaluation is undeniably great. Evaluators who produce flattering reports on programs will find continued employment. Programs that are well-reviewed can continue and grow. Administrators responsible for highly regarded programs often enjoy professional advancement. All the while, it is difficult to demonstrate and document that an educational program has had the desired effect on the people it was designed to serve. As a result, there is a constant temptation in evaluation studies to make the program look better, or perhaps more needy, than it is. To counteract this tendency, the current trend is to develop interdisciplinary and interagency evaluation teams so that no one person bears all the responsibility (Rockwell & Buck, 1995). If the composition of these teams is determined by contextual factors and needs, such teams hold promise for creating an effective system of checks and balances.

Conclusion

Consider how vast amounts of time, effort, and resources could have been saved in each of the opening scenarios through the application of the basic evaluation principles discussed in this chapter. In the first case of the transitional 1st grade, participatory evaluation that included families and children from the outset could have yielded a much better intervention strategy. In the second case of the state standards, practitioners are understandably arguing for qualitative and formative evaluation, rather than strict adherence to a quantitative and summative evaluation design. It remains to be seen whether and how the state will respond. In the third scenario describing two program initiatives in Kenya, one can see how a feasibility study could have prevented a school building without students or a national curriculum that cannot be delivered because material and human resources are lacking.

In order to fulfill the promise of promoting high-quality educational programs, program evaluation must be done continuously and systematically; genuinely involve all the stakeholders, including the children; inform policy- and decision-making; and be flexible enough to accommodate multiple perspectives. Indeed, neither quantitative nor qualitative information alone is adequate to evaluate complex, comprehensive programs that serve diverse groups of learners in a host of settings and cultural contexts.

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